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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000ee3c>

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Sense of place and festival in Northern Italy:

Perspectives on place, time and community

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March 2011

DATE OF SUBMISSION: 8 MARCH 2011

DATE OF AWARD: 22 AUGUST 2011

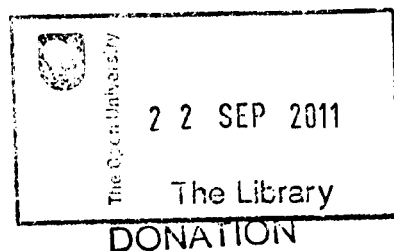
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are some particularly significant people without whom this PhD fieldwork and culminating thesis could not have been nurtured through the long months and years of gestation and creation, and ultimately brought into the light of the world. The first is my ever-supportive husband Peter; then my marvellous listeners and constant inspirations, our children Dylan and Morganne. I must also thank my dear friend and frequent travel companion in Italy, Barbara Cornell. She provided kindly encouragement, insight and a calming presence, including on snowy mountainsides and foggy, dark lanes.

My Open University supervisors Dr. Graham Harvey and Dr. Marion Bowman have been sources of astute assistance, fine-tuning and good cups of tea when we were in the same country. As Michelangelo is reported to have said about a block of marble, with scholarly intuition they identified the potential form in my unshaped ideas. I also wish to thank Dr. Belinda Winder, Dr. Kim Knott and Mr. Gerald Parsons who provided generously of their expertise, time and assistance with editing and clarifications.

There are innumerable participants in Italy who gave generously of their time, opinions and imaginations, without making the perhaps rather eccentric-seeming American doctoral researcher feel unwelcome. Many of them do not even have names in the study as I met them for only a few minutes in a festival somewhere. Casey wrote: 'The gathering power of place works in many ways and at many levels' (1996: 38). Through a series of unexpected vicissitudes, my path led to Lombardy, where northern Italy 'gathered me in' to share its stories and its wisdom. Italy's chains of reciprocity and inherent, ingrained relationality

generously offered opportunities for this fieldwork, as the many stories represented here told of liminal and numinous spaces, of historic tradition or tragedy, and of struggles to preserve traditions and home-places. It is my hope that these communities — human and more-than-human — in the lands and places studied, observed and heard in their multivocal expressions, may also benefit in some way through this fieldwork and this thesis.



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Consultation only

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the concept of sense of place in relation to five calendrical, place-based festivals in two regions of northern Italy: Lombardy and Piedmont. Drawing from interdisciplinary critical thought, including archaeology, environmental philosophy, ritual studies and performance studies, among others, the thesis examines how place is honoured, experienced and embodied. The thesis reviews critical thought on the interanimation of place and society, demonstrating how the agency of place can emerge in ritualised community celebrations, such as feasting and festival. The fundamental argument put forth is that in heterotopic and polychronic space such as that offered by ritual and festival, a bridge can be created showing profound communication between humanity and place.

The symbolic actions and traditions observed and studied here manifest local or regional identity, with specific gastronomic and agricultural customs that offer uncommon performances of place-based traditions in annual community gatherings. Politics, history, identity and foodways are examined through the lens of engagement with place as well as with community. Theories on the agency of place, on temporality and materiality figure centrally in the argument, which illustrates how bonds and communication between place and humanity exhibit a sometimes surprisingly profound relational epistemology in late modern Western society.

The analysis springs from both heuristic and hermeneutic philosophies of methodology, which maintain a historical, philosophical and ecological perspective. Based upon an

extensive examination of the critical literature and the thesis’ ethnographic surveys, the Italian festival fieldwork is analysed through the use of an indexed ‘Scale of Engagement’.

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CHAPTER ONE

SENSE OF PLACE AND FESTIVAL: INTERWEAVING LAND AND HUMANITY

... you jagged, uneven peaks, which we who have grown up with you know so well, and carry impressed in our minds like the faces of our own family. (...) you streams, the murmur of whose voices we can tell apart like the voices of our closest friends (Manzoni, 1972:164).

1.0 Introduction: The festival bridge to Sense of place

This introductory chapter lays out the foundational concepts to this thesis, including the four key points encapsulated in the chapter title above. As a point of departure, it examines different meanings of sense of place and also of festival, which often are not only festivals but also community rituals. The significant metaphors and theories underpinning the thesis are laid out here, such as how cultures and communities can demonstrate and embody their intricately interwoven bonds with place through ritual, performance and feasting on the stage that festival creates.

...anthropologists have paid scant attention to one of the most basic dimensions of human experience – that close companion of heart and mind, often subdued, yet potentially overwhelming, that is known as sense of place (Basso, 1996: 54).

The Academy has begun to discuss this often ineffable, sometimes fleeting and perhaps seemingly atavistic sense in recent decades. This thesis draws on a number of theorists in diverse fields studying what sense of place is, how it is manifested and can be expressed symbolically and ritually. The following chapters depict that this latter point particularly applies to Italy.

Central to the thesis argument is the theory that heterotopic time and space (Foucault, 1998, 2000: 178-183) are created in a festival's distinctive temporality, which can allow new awareness to slip through. Intertwined with this is the theory of place agency, and how a

place can have such power that it *causes*, it becomes active (Barron, 2006: 367; 370; Ingold, 2000: 95-98; 200-201; Knott, 2005a: 34,129; Plumwood, 1995: 34; 2008: 6-7; Watson, 2003:155). Liminality and ritual in all its nuanced forms can allow the awareness of active place, of 'place-power', to be felt, acknowledged and embodied. Feasting and foodways are traditions examined in the fieldwork, through the lens of 'ingesting topography' (Leynse, 2006), another aspect of profoundly living and honouring the place. Let us however begin at the beginning with the most fundamental term here: sense of place. There are many ways of defining and expressing sense of place for human beings.

The metaphor of the bridge is used here in the central argument. Bridges are often built with strands of cable and steel. Consequently the metaphor here works in two ways: first it expresses the weaving together of diverse threads of different academic disciplines in the thesis. Next it demonstrates how festivals can offer human beings a bridge — between cultures, between communities, offering a means to span the gap often found in late modern Western culture between humanity and place (Latour, 1993: 114-116; 135; Tilley et al, 2000: 219-220). Within these festivals, food is frequently a basic element of that bridge, allowing participants to interconnect sensuously with place by becoming 'situated eaters' who 'ingest topography' (Leynse, 2006). Basso has an apt term for this intimate interconnection, 'interanimation':

... interanimation relates directly to the fact that familiar places are experienced as inherently meaningful, their significance and value being found to reside in (and, it may seem, to emanate from) the form and arrangement of their observable characteristics (Basso, 1995: 55).

1.1 Sense of place and agency of place

The term ‘sense of place’ may seem a rather cold phrase in comparison and contrast with the more evocative Greek *topophilia* — love of landscape. Some scholars theorise that sense of place is an essential need: ‘To have a sense of place — to sense the spirit of place — one’s own place — is as indispensable to the human experience as our basic urges for food or for sex’ (Lewis, 1979: 29 cited in DeMiglio and Williams, 2008: 19). However, according to other theorists here and my own research, it is clear that sense of place does not necessarily contain the nuance of loving a place, as *topophilia* does. Sense of place, as it is used in our postmodern Anglo world, encompasses many ideas and terms, across disciplines and cultures. Among the sensory codes used for the evocation of sense of place — similar but not identical to *Genius loci*, which was in classical times a minor god connected to a specific land form — are foods derived from local sources. Sense of place is heavily nuanced by myriad emotions, senses and experiences that are anchored and embodied by physical sensations and memories, including those of food. It can be eaten, spoken, sung, performed, symbolised with clothing — whether in communal settings, or simply felt at heart in a quiet, individual way. Therefore, while sense of place is often discussed in the branch of philosophy known as deep ecology, it is a term now used widely in such diverse disciplines as environmental studies, religious studies, archaeology and anthropology, healthcare, and so forth (Capra, 1996: 3-13; Eyles and Williams, 2008: 1-7; DeMiglio and Williams, 2008: 15-27; Macy, 1998: 45-51; Merchant, 2005: 91-115; Naess, 1995: 230-231). As a complex human emotion, sense of place could easily require many more terms to encompass it. For example, it can include the idea of ‘bio-regionalism’, the awareness of traits, features and components which together mark a biological area or complex system of ‘life zones’. Bio-regional awareness theoretically can help humanity to live in a more ecologically sustainable manner in that region (Snyder, 1995:

460; Sessions, 1995: 366-368), due to the heightened sensitivity to watersheds, wildlife, ecosystems and so forth that bio-regionalism imparts.

This thesis will examine the concept that things and in particular places can have agency and thus can affect human behaviour in unexpected ways (Bennett, 2004). The concept of 'things' is an elastic category that can include animate and inanimate objects, places, and so forth. Land or place can easily be included in this category of the inanimate, or of the animate, depending on one's perspective (Basso, 1996: 56-57; Bennett, 2004: 365-367; Casey 1996: 24-25; Ingold, 2000: 200-201; 345). Land, place and Nature are an 'other' — capitalised in this thesis, 'Other' (see section 1.4) — whose voice and whose stories are not only marginalised but ignored and silenced (Kovel, 1990 cited in Gardiner, 1993; Plumwood, 2008; Rodman, 2003). If the relationship and interanimation of Nature-humanity is indeed ineffable, difficult to express in words, then it is through actions and through symbols, or through symbolic action, that this bond with and agency of Nature is most eloquently expressed. It is expressed often through ritual and ritualised gatherings, such as community festivals. My research examines this ontology and epistemology in Italy, highlighting the intersection between sense of place, identity, foodways, resistance to destruction of place or traditions, and festivals or public rituals. The active engagement with place that Ingold describes (borrowing from Heidegger) as a 'dwelling perspective' (2000:5; 185-187) reveals the immanence of vitality in place (Ingold, 2000: 149-150) and demonstrates its impact and capacity for agency. Land and place's ability to influence human actions, beliefs, emotions and community traditions is a fundamental premise of this thesis.

Casey's phenomenological perspective is that 'human beings — along with other entities on earth — are ineluctably place-bound. More even than earthlings, we are placelings...' (Casey, 1996: 19). Self-reflexively, it is interesting that northern Italy's festivals created a nascent sense of place in me, allowing my own bonds with the north of Italy to grow. (My previous periods of living in Italy had been in central and southern Italy, and thus the place-power of northern Italy was a new experience.) This fragile bond with and delicate awareness of the more-than-human Other requires nurturing and care, and even with such sensitivity may not grow.

These factors and components above describe my understanding and usage of the term sense of place in this thesis. To reiterate: it is a nuanced feeling, instinct and sense that can be coloured with memories or made vivid with actual embodied, sensual experiences.

Experiences derived through the senses, such as food, can trigger memories, sometimes very powerfully. Sense of place is often imbued with this sensual identification with place and all that its features or memories entail. The concepts and the arguments above form the threshold across which the thesis enters to establish its fundamental critical theory: that, in the heterotopic space (Foucault, 1998, 2000) and polychronic temporality (Lymer, 2010, 2004; Witmore, 2006) of the festival, eating polenta annually in community may be termed a ritual and a tattered serpent costume can allow a festival actor to embody a mountain. Italy's potent materiality joins its likewise distinctive relationality in demonstrating ritualised expressions of place.

1.2 Relational, embodied awareness

Sense of place can tie us to a spot on the planet, perhaps incurring a feeling of belonging as to family or friends, clan or tribe. Place can also relay information — in the case of the Western Apache with whom Keith Basso worked, places can impart wisdom (Basso, 1996: 58; 66-70). Whether wisdom is passed on through a place or not, for indigenous people place is part of the network of relations (Basso, 1996: 9; Ingold, 2000: 166-171; 422-423), and the bonds with place are like those towards human beings. All humans, like other mammals, are able to feel such bonds and to see place as a part of their relational network; all can have or develop a relational epistemology (Ingold, 2000: 5, Milton, 2002: 47-49) with place, regardless of race, ethnicity or historical period. The concept of relational epistemology runs throughout this thesis, as it applies well to cultural beliefs and practices of relationality observed in the fieldwork in Italy.

My Italian fieldwork's participants, whose contributions to my study in northern Italy are reviewed and considered primarily in Chapters five and six, have varied definitions of sense of place. Sense of place in all human beings (and other beings as well, one can wager) is felt, embodied and experienced through one's senses. It is a sensual experience and a sensually-registered experience, whether that may be negative or positive. As Basso examines, looking at Casey's phenomenological work (Basso, 1996: 9): 'to be in place is to know, is to become aware of one's very consciousness and sensuous presence in the world' (Basso, 1996: 9). This awareness is made up of the physical: auditory, musical, verbal, olfactory and gastronomic. Some writers speak of landscape, where others occasionally refer to a place as a soundscape or auditory space (Feld, 1996: 94-96; Witmore, 2006: 267-269; 274-276 *inter alia*). The

festival takes place in just such a multi-dimensional, multi-sensory embodied experience, as the fieldwork chapters will show.

For example, Italy's gastronomic culture has many special and nuanced meanings; Chapter six explores this through the critical literature on foodways, including that on Piedmont's organisation *Slow Food*, now known internationally for its environmental and social campaigns. Some of the cultural and traditional festivals and practices examined in this thesis demonstrate antidotes to 'fast living', to environmental and social degradation — a theory promoted by the literature of the *Slow Food* organisation (Andrews, 2008; Petrini, 2005, 2007; Portinari, 1989). It is interesting to note that *Slow Food* originated in the *Langhe* area of Piedmont which figures prominently in the fieldwork in Chapter six. Carlo Petrini, founder of the *Slow Food* organisation, believes that the kinds of practices (such as those discussed in the festival fieldwork) of conscious communal eating and attention to locally derived and prepared foods, can help to heal some of society's wounds (Andrews, 2008; Petrini, 2005, 2007; Portinari, 1989). Many in the fieldwork expressed similar views, in their own words, voicing their sense of the sacred found in the festival/rituals. Critical observations on the gastronomic means of experiencing place are introduced also through Leynse's fieldwork on France, which is reviewed in subsequent chapters. She succinctly captured 'the visceral and metaphorical consumption of a given landscape' in France (Leynse, 2006: 129-130). Consequently, in a similar manner, the *sagre* and *feste*, (names for the cultural and agricultural festivals in Italy), articulately perform place in a way that offers a specific local sense of identity and conveys Italian relationality with place.

1.3 Festival as ritual

The festivals and rituals created in myriad towns and villages across Italy are ‘sensitive orchestrations’, in Turner’s phrase (1982) cited below.

Ritual, in tribal society, represents not an obsessional concern with repetitive acts, as Freud sometimes supposed, but a sensitive orchestration of many strands of symbolic action in all available sensory codes... (Turner, 1982a: 254).

Manifested in these communal festivals and community rituals are sensory experiences wrought by symbolic costumes or cultural representations entwined with the history of that area. However, the messages conveyed by many of these ritualised festivals and feasts have often been missed. In the same essay cited above Turner wrote regarding ritual and temporality,

Thus we have two kinds of anti-temporality, the perennially sacred, rooted perhaps in the primordial manifestation of the eternal (...); the perennially sacrilegious, human freedom to resist and even transgress the culturally axiomatic, the most sacred texts, the mightiest rulers and their commandments (Turner, 1982a: 254).

Theories from Foucault, Bakhtin, Ingold, Latour and others figure importantly in this thesis’ examination of the unique temporality and the non-conventional social structures of the festival/ritual, as Chapter two’s literature review will discuss. The community festivals examined here show aspects of what at one time in Italy could have been considered sacrilegious, and indeed, none of them is a Catholic festival in the traditional sense of the myriad *feste* throughout Italy. In Italy there are numerous festivals venerating local Catholic saints and local aspects of the Madonna (Crociani-Windland, 2007; LaChapelle, 1995; Orsi, 2000; Parsons, 2004; Tak, 2002). Some of these are very famous, such as the *Palio* horse race of Siena, which is discussed in the Chapter two literature review, and again in depth in Chapter four. In the four towns where five *sagre* were observed, (the festival of the *Badalisc* in Andrista, Lombardy; the Pumpkin festival and Carnival of Omegna; the Celtic New Year of Milan; and the Summer of Saint Martin in Paroldo), not one is a typical community ritual

venerating an aspect of Catholic theology. Sense of place as experienced and manifested in Italy underscores all that is reflected in the connotations of home, community and family. Orsi's work and others reviewed in this thesis show that for many Italians, as well as Italian-Americans, family and all that signifies home-place provide immediate manifestations of the sacred. In the fieldwork some participants spoke of the sacred, healing, even absolving, power of the festivals' communal feasting. This communal time offers a 'communion' in a quasi-liturgical sense, which for some of the fieldwork's participants resonates with ritualised sacredness.

The thesis' argument that these festivals can be considered public rituals is supported by a review of literature (Chapter two) from such scholars as Ronald Grimes (1982, 2000, 2006) and Catherine Bell (1997, 2007). Their work has defined certain categories of ritual, a number of which coincide with the festivals in this thesis. In fact, Bell cites that, for Grimes, festival is a category of ritual itself (Bell, 1997: 93). Others delineated specifically include the calendrical and commemorative rites, civil ceremonies, life-cycle rites, feasting and political rituals (Bell, 1997: 94). Some of the gatherings studied here are large and are promoted as tourist attractions, while some are extremely small and are known only to a select community of local people. The pageantry and theatricality of some of these events expressing place or season offer examples of 'a poetics of dwelling' (Ingold, 2000: 11). Chapter four explores the phenomenon of the community festival universally, reviewing Italian history as well as the origins and meanings underlying the famous examples in Italy of the *Palio* of Siena and the Carnival in Venice.

1.3.1 Positive aspects of festivals

The preceding section has discussed the thesis argument that festivals are, in many senses, community rituals. This theme returns in depth in Chapter four, which discusses specifically the phenomenon of the feast day, or festival. Rituals are deeply symbolic for human beings and their symbols ring profoundly in our deeper minds, in our unconscious levels of consciousness. Through these symbols humanity can express the ineffable (Bell, 1997: 61-68). Thus festivals are more important to a community than perhaps they may appear at first glance. They are not merely an opportunity to see one's neighbors, have a good meal or a few drinks and laughs; not merely the opportunity for economic return to a town. In a profounder sense they have an archetypal, psycho-spiritual significance that is easy to overlook (Grimes, 2006: 11-13; 97; 145).

However, the practical economic benefits are real and worthy of study as well. Derrett writes of tourism and community development, noting that place and landscape are 'a medium for community values and beliefs that are celebrated in community cultural events' (2003: 51). Later in this same article he notes a specific element: 'festivals provide a vehicle to preserve and celebrate culture and facilitate family reunions'. Quoting from Ferris (1996) he states that 'place is a family affair' (Ferris, 1996 cited in Derrett, 2003: 51). Here the element of family returns on different levels. Consequently, through different lenses one may perceive that festival can provide a space whereby place joins humanity's chains of relationship and broadens its relational epistemology. The community festival or ritual can be a vehicle to demonstrate a community in a visual or dramatised form, to celebrate itself and its shared values. It 'performs place' in all its dimensions and nuances, and can also provide economic return to a depopulating village. Derrett observed in his work on four festivals in Australia:

‘Festivals serve the needs of residents. They can protect the natural environment, increase social equity, and provide a vision for participants...’ (Derrett, 2003: 49). In Chapters five and six the fieldwork regards the history of rural Italy and its depopulation through emigration (Ginsborg, 2003: 218-223; Sapelli, 1995: 58; 82-85). The multiple gifts of festival include the potential to restore the vitality and vibrancy of place through such community events. This in turn can restore the bonds in the human community.

1.4 A note on language and on terms

There are a few points regarding language that are appropriate to clarify, before going further into the argument. Various turns of phrase may be noted as somewhat unusual; for example, Other and Nature are both written with upper case. Chapter two on the critical literature and three on methodology will elaborate on these points. However, to unpack in brief, in my personal epistemology Nature is a being or community from which we who are Westerners are often alienated, an entity often overlooked or exploited, just as we are alienated from fellow humans in our daily lives. Western society exploits, devalues and commoditises relationships, individuals and time, just as it does place and Nature. Thus Nature can be discussed in ways that are similar to other communities or individuals which are also ‘Other’. Writing these terms with the uppercase highlights our need to re-frame and rethink our relationships with both.

Another usage which arises throughout the thesis, and which may appear unclear to those drawing on different theorists, is the frequent use of liminal and of numinous. My use of liminal is to reflect a distinctive sense of time and place that is at a ‘threshold’ (as the term’s derivation implies), a threshold where one crosses away from the conventional and into a

different awareness. Liminality implies that which is not conventional, mundane or everyday — rather it is ‘time out of time’. When it is used in a Turnerian sense in relation to his theories of *communitas*, this is specified. (Turner’s work is discussed in the literature review in Chapter two, section 2.9.) In this space of liminality an awareness of something Other, of something often not tangible or easily expressed may arise, and which can include a sense of the *numen*, or the spirit in a place. In those moments the place may be said to be numinous. Here my meaning comes from the derivation of the word, from general usage, and not from other scholars or theorists.

1.5 Bocelli in Milan – a *campanilismo* anecdote

This thesis demonstrates that Italian sense of place is commonly expressed and embodied in pageantry, music, ritual and food. A recurring focus in this thesis is *campanilismo*, the fierce local chauvinism where passionate loyalties to home and local identity arise in Italy (Orsi, 2002: 34; Parsons, 2004: xvii; Tak, 1990: 90). Here is an anecdote from my research journal that artistically illustrates symbolic Italian sense of place. One of Italy's primary national holidays is the 2nd of June, the feast of the establishment of the Italian Republic in 1946. On 2 June 2008 world-renowned Italian opera singer Andrea Bocelli sang in Milan's principal square, *Piazza Duomo*, the heart of old Milan. This central city open space and meeting space is the square dominated by its grand cathedral, the *Duomo* and figures importantly in this thesis’ fieldwork. The 2008 concert was a free, open-air event, which opened with a poem about Milan, evoking the history and imagery of Hannibal crossing the Alps to the northwest (near the areas studied here) with his elephants. When Bocelli broke into the national anthem, *Fratelli d'Italia*, the crowd accompanied him. After that his next song was a much-loved opera aria from *Rigoletto*, *La Donna è Mobile*, on which the crowd likewise sang along. Then

Bocelli sang a well-known Neapolitan folk song, *Funiculi, Funicula*, and the crowd responded half-heartedly. However, when his next folk song was a Milanese song the audience roared its approval and accompanied him loudly. Orsi, in his study of Harlem's devotion to the Madonna of Mt. Carmel, repeatedly uses the image of events taking place 'In the company of the Madonna, within sight of her benevolent and encouraging gaze' (Orsi, 2002: xxiii). It undoubtedly was not lost on the huge crowd assembled that night in *Piazza Duomo*, as they fervently sang Milan's song, that they were standing under the gaze of the golden *Madonnina* topping the *Duomo*, the emblem of 'Milanesità' (to coin a phrase derived from Parsons' work on Siena, *senesità*, (Parsons, 2004: 60).) This public ritual in Milan created by Bocelli's free concert in honour of Italy's national day displayed a vivid symbolic example of *campanilismo*, as well as of other theories discussed further on in the thesis regarding civil religion and also regarding the performance of place.

1.6 The *domus* and the *paese* — shared, rooted values

Hermeneutic awareness regarding language brings essential insights into the culture behind that language. Here is a linguistic clue to Italian sense of place: the word in Italian for a person being lost or disoriented is *spaesato*. This means literally to be without a country, *paese*, or in the sense that it is used generally, to be without a town. This is in itself an interesting usage: the word for country is the same as the word for town or village. Therefore if an Italian reveals his or her hometown, he or she will say 'my country' — *il mio paese*. Identity and its rootedness is a theme that the fieldwork uncovered, revealing how local communities strive to maintain their identity and how the festivals they create often perform identity as they perform place. The unification of Italy took place in 1861, but what would truly unify the diverse regions and dialects cobbled together by its leaders has baffled

governments and citizens ever since. The language 'Italian' was created at the time of Italy's unification out of the Tuscan dialect (Penman, 1972: 11). Today there is greater uniformity in language across the country than ever before in Italy's past, due to the advances in education and due to the national media. However, people's allegiances and loyalties to their home regions, to their *paesi*, are passionate and long-lived. In other words, their sense of place is connected to the region of their birth, of their families' origins or of their personal history.

The quote taken at the start of this chapter from Italy's greatest nineteenth century novel, *The Betrothed*, gives literary credence to the Italian loyalties towards family and extended 'clan', which can include home-place. Lucia, having to escape from home and in dire straits, thinks of the land of her childhood as family; in another section of the book she calls the mountains 'her mountains' (Manzoni, 1972: 164; 386). Orsi writes of the *domus* in Italian-American culture, a perspective that regards home and family as sacred, and which also honours the values taught communally as part of that sacred domus. Orsi depicts this sacred temporal plane extending to and encompassing the neighbourhood of Italian Harlem, as well as the festival of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel itself (Orsi, 2002: xlv–xlvii). (Orsi's work is discussed further in Chapter two and also in Chapter five.) Such shared values can live in the neighbourhood as in the land — intrinsically interweaving society and place in 'chains of relationship and reciprocity', as Giulio Sapelli has termed the bonds of relational thinking typical of Italian society (Sapelli, 1995: 44-45; 64).

Sense of place can provide a bond, a sense of identity and a capability for relationship, which like other bonds in human psychology may offer potent balancing and healing effects. If a person has never bonded with a place, has moved constantly and does not feel a loyalty to one

place in particular, they will have a difficult time bonding anywhere — rather like a baby who does not bond with its birth mother, and therefore has impaired relationships in the rest of its life (DeMiglio and Williams, 2008: 26-27; Derrett, 2003: 51; Manzo, 2008: 89-91). There can also be a negative side to ardent identification with place, ‘poisoned sense of place’ as Relph termed it. He called such feeling: ‘an excess of local or national zeal (...) a tendency to become a platform for ethnic nationalist supremacy and xenophobia’ (Relph, 1997: 222, cited in De Miglio and Williams, 2008: 24). Chapter five reviews some of the potentially exclusionary and divisive political stances portrayed in one of the festivals studied.

1.7 Conclusion

Late modern Western society moves at break-neck speed, often lost in ‘virtual’ communication, and not present to its actual placement on the Earth. It is frequently unaware of the history or the multiplicity of influences at work, emerging from the place. This thesis argues that the phenomenon of the community festival can restore our awareness of the ‘sensuous placefulness’ of living on the Earth (Casey, 1996:19). Performing place through local and regional *feste* and *sagre*, Italy's local festivals, gives evidence of loyalties and relationships, within communities and to the regions. Such community rituals as those studied in Italy offer expression of the embodiment of place demonstrating a relational epistemology. In the uncommon temporality of the fair, festivals can at times metaphorically bridge the humanity-Nature divide. At these moments place-agency can act upon communities, as evidenced in the distinctively local traditions and foodways of Piedmont and Lombardy. Now we move on to an examination of the critical thought and the theorists inspiring and informing this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

*Sire, at this point I have spoken to you of all the cities that I know, said Marco Polo.
Yet, there's one of which you never speak — Venice, said Kubla Khan.
Marco Polo smiled. And what else did you think that I was describing to you? (...) Every time I
describe a city, I say something about Venice
(Calvino, 1972:94).*

2.0 Critical theories from various disciplines

This chapter demonstrates the diverse and interdisciplinary nature of Religious Studies and draws from critical theorists from across a variety of fields. Disciplines as diverse as anthropology, archaeology, geography, ritual studies, philosophy, history and performance studies are represented here. This literature review is divided into four sections, in order to lay groundwork for the thesis. The sections are: sense of place; festival and ritual; specific studies on Italy; and finally, studies that influenced the analytical structure. Relationality, identity, healthful living and the agency of the material are concepts that flow through this thesis. For example, the teamwork and community integration involved in creating a festival can lead a community to greater psychological and spiritual health; in the cases of places that have maintained this tradition, this can nurture existing health and wellbeing. Pertinent to this thesis and this literature review is how the deep bond with family, which is evident in Italian culture, can incorporate place and Nature. If human beings have a 'relational epistemology' with Nature (Milton, 2002: 47) or as Ingold phrases it, if humanity has 'relational thinking' (2000: 3-4), which goes beyond species differentiation, how will that affect humanity's perspectives on Nature and environment? Barron, Bennet, Ingold, Knott, Milton and other scholars have theorised that our understanding of agency can be extended to include place and the material. If we extend such capability for agency, then perhaps the festivals studied here spring out of a deeper union with place than previously conceived. Basso's theories on humanity's 'interanimation' with place (Basso, 1996: 22; 55) are

exemplified in these festivals. Such theories on place-power form another integral part of my theoretical structure.

These writers and others examined in this literature review look at such concepts in diverse forms and diverse language, some in reference to Italy and festival, some with other means. The weaving of theorists here commences the metaphorical weaving of the many strands that build the bridge to sense of place.

PART ONE: SENSE OF PLACE, NATURE AND RELATIONALITY

2.1 *Topophilia*, placelessness and quality of life

There is a vernacular expression: ‘we stand on the shoulders of giants’. Given the topic, this literature review could delve into the past, returning to classical writers or to mediaeval and Enlightenment philosophers. It could begin with nineteenth and early twentieth century thinkers. However, in order to give a late postmodern framework in direct relation to the fieldwork and analyses, it will not look quite so far back. Nonetheless, some ‘giants’ and works of key importance in this field require review.

As a point of departure, one cannot write about sense of place without discussing Yi-Fu Tuan. He defines the term *topophilia*, in his now classic book of the same name, as ‘the affective bond between people and place or setting’ (1974: 4). He admits it is a ‘neologism, useful in that it can be defined broadly to include all of the human being’s affective ties with the material environment’ (ibid: 93). His book on the concept has become an influential work in

the field of geography, as well as in studies of sense of place and related themes. Tuan examines history, ancient, modern and post-modern; gender differences, psychology studies, and many other intersecting areas to try to understand the emotions, loyalties and fervor with which humans view place. He also examines the religious foundations for ancient cultures' construction of cities and sacred sites, systems of symbols and 'cosmological schemata' (Tuan, 1974: 20, 23).

Tuan summarises topophilia with arguments that foreshadow some of this thesis' theories on sense of place.

Topophilia takes many forms and varies greatly in emotional range and intensity. It is a start to describe what they are: fleeting visual pleasure; the sensual delight of physical contact; the fondness for a place because it is familiar, because it is home and incarnates the past, because it evokes a pride of ownership or of creation; joy in things because of animal health and vitality (Tuan, 1974: 247).

Tuan's descriptions are significant: of affective bonds, of topophilia having an emotional range, of the physical sensations evoked by deep connection with certain places. Tuan views topophilia as both affected by culture and religion as well as by our interactions with the environment. He recognises the complexity of the topic and concept, but believes that it is necessary 'to clarify their meaning through the simple device (in chapters 6 and 7) of dichotomizing culture-environment' (Tuan, 1974: 92). This is one of the critical areas in which we part company, as it is not the purpose of this thesis to dichotomise, but on the contrary to bridge any perceived culture/Nature gap. Theorists will be discussed later on who offer ideas on how society may 'reframe' our perspective and language in order to do that.

Tuan does not discuss rituals as connected to topophilia, although he discusses life in the greatest cities of the ancient world. His Chapter eleven looks at the 'Ideal City and symbols

of transcendence' (1974:150-172); his discussions of power, of the legitimacy of a ruler and of the origin of cities as ceremonial centres are pertinent to an understanding of Italy and Italian history. These discussions are relevant in the later discussion of civil religion. Tuan points out that many cities began as ceremonial centres.

When urbanism is traced back to its primary centers and into the distant past, we find not the marketplace or fortress, but the idea of the supernatural creation of a world. The agent is a god, a priest-king or hero; the locus of creation is the center of the world. That center is usually marked in some way. (...) The city transcends the uncertainties of life; it reflects the precision, the order, and the predictability of the heavens (Tuan, 1974: 151-152).

The power of the cities was linked to the power of the rituals performed there, which in turn validated and as Tuan wrote, legitimated their rulers (Tuan, 1974: 151). This theme will arise again in Chapter five part two, on Milan's Celtic New Year festival. As time went on, even though the rulers changed, the cities remained as symbols of order and power: '.... it was a ritual city, a *Civitas Dei* on earth' (152). These are useful concepts for understanding ritual and public festival in the Mediterranean world, historically and still today in Italy. There is a deeply engrained, possibly collective unconscious awareness, (to use the Jungian phrase for that level of mind that is shared by all human beings, the realm of symbols and archetypes), that conveys a sense of well-being, of order and of legitimacy derived from community festivals and ritualised gatherings. The city is seen as the intersection of heaven and earth, as Tuan explains in this chapter with diagrams of ancient cities, offering people a symbol of 'order and permanence' in a world that was unpredictable (Tuan, 1974:152).

Edward Relph likewise created an enduring work on place and the experience of placelessness in the 1970s. He calls his approach phenomenological and sees it as grounded 'in the geography of the lived world of our everyday experiences' (Relph, 1976, 2008: 6). (Various theorists' critiques of his perspective, as well as Tuan's, are mentioned below and covered in

greater depth in section 2.11.) Relph offers many ideas and caveats which have been inspiring to this thesis, drawing on some of the same classical and earlier twentieth century roots as others in this literature review — such as Heidegger’s theory of ‘dwelling’ (Relph, 1976, 2008: 17-18). Relph’s views relate to the field of eco-psychology discussed further ahead, which examines health and well-being derived through relationships with place. Our profound experiences of place can provide well-being through our connection with the spirit of place:

This is *genius loci*: “a living, ecological relationship between an observer and an environment, a person and a place”, a source of self-knowledge and a point of reference that is possibly most important in childhood, but which can provide a centre of personal stability and significance throughout life (Cobb, 1970:125, cited in Relph, 1976, 2008:66).

In later work, he offers a darker, precautionary view of twenty-first century environmental challenges. Relph sees our serious global predicament as related to loss of sense of place and community, making astute observations in his contribution to Eyles and Williams’ volume *Sense of Place, Health and Quality of Life* (Eyles and Williams, 2008). He states a need for holistic thought that rediscovers ‘a humanistic, pragmatic understanding of place... as an aspect of the collective awareness that everywhere is part of the whole’ (Relph, 2008: 42).

In terms of reframing our language and of maintaining a holistic view of place, feminist scholars such as Rose (1993) have been critical of Tuan and Relph’s ‘masculinist’ perspectives (Rose, 1993: 5-8; 43-48), which often have seemed to romanticise home and place without taking into any account women’s (or other oppressed people’s) often negative associations with place. Such critiques are reviewed further in section 2.11.

2.2 Reciprocal relationships with place, Nature and community

The critical framework continues with Kay Milton's work (2002). Among them is her treatment of the local versus the global (105-107), and how she views the sacred as rooted in the local. Milton (in drawing also from Hornborg) draws the intersection between the local and personal identity (107).

This leads to the judgement (sic) that the local provides a secure sense of personal identity, while the global provides alienation and anxiety. (...) This implies that it is possible to experience sacredness only in local contexts, where personal identity is defined in terms of local associations... (Milton, 2002: 107).

Milton demonstrates how the local is the irreplaceable which offers specific community through landscape, kin and neighbour relationships, with handicrafts and heirlooms as objects factoring into that identity (Hornborg, 1993: 133, cited in Milton, 2002: 107). These are local 'reference points for identity' — identity-creating factors which are grounded, and in that sense 'real'. Lymer's work, reviewed in a later section, asserts that these reference points from concrete artifacts continue to have power throughout time (Lymer, 2010). This is contrasted with abstractions, like money or one's professional position in a global marketplace (Milton, 2002: 106-108). In my research this is borne out by the Italian festival which offers a grounded means of resisting the loss of the irreplaceable local, identified by Italian culture in its traditions, foods, folklore or religious symbols. Milton articulates how sense of place is maintained and becomes, in a sense, sacred, through her examinations of what 'local' culture offers.

Her discussions of ritual and of certain societies' care in keeping a reciprocal relationship with Nature contribute to the framework for the research here, as does Ingold — examined below — a theorist she likewise attributes as having influenced her work. Relationality is a

fundamental point in all its potential nuances, for as Milton says: ‘It is responsive relatedness that constitutes personhood, not humanness’ (Milton, 2002: 48). Milton writes that the ‘perception of personhood’ (Milton, 2002: 47) often shown by indigenous people in relation to Nature or to the animals they may hunt, is a ‘relational epistemology’.

This is because, in the western modernist tradition, personhood is part of what something *is*, an individual; in relational epistemology, personhood emerges out of what something *does* in relation to others (Milton: 47; emphasis from the original).

As odd as it may seem to refer to an industrialised Western European nation in this light, my argument is that the intense family and community bonds in Italy express similar relationality and reciprocity. Through these bonds and the kind of communion shared around a table with family and community, a sense of sacredness evolves. Devotional attention, which in Italy is often attributed to food, becomes a means for deeper ecological awareness, through place-based identity creation and profound place connection. Part three on Italian studies delves into these topics, as do the fieldwork chapters.

Milton’s critical thought is similar to the relational epistemologies seen in Ingold, Basso and others influential in this thesis. She was inspired by deep ecologist Arne Naess whose concept of the ‘biophilia hypothesis’ argues that ‘Nature, and particularly the presence of other living things is important for our emotional health’ (Milton, 2002: 61). Nature and place are seen as being part of our ‘circle of relations’, a concept often attributed to non-Western perspectives. Rather Milton is interested in establishing that rational thought and emotionally-charged or directed thought are not separate. She disputes the Cartesian, mechanistic models that have defined the environmental debates in recent decades (Milton, 2002: 14). Latour’s theories also dispute Western dualism and its traditional disregard for the existence of networks. These are important theories for this thesis and are discussed below.

2.2.1 Basso and Casey — new paradigms in relationality with place

Listening to the messages that the land conveys, and working to keep its vitality are actions that one would carry out for any significant relationship — family, friends, partner. Basso's work with the Western Apache in Arizona, USA, offers theoretical yet grounded form to language expressing such relationality with place: 'wisdom sits in places' (Basso, 1996: 53, 67). Both Basso and Casey draw from and are inspired by earlier philosophers such as Heidegger, Kant and Spinoza, as did Arne Naess himself. Naess is perhaps the most prominent figure in the world of deep ecology. His work is reviewed in section 2.3 below. Casey articulates the need to recognise place once more, to 'reinstatate place in the wake of its demise in modern Western thought' (Casey, 1996: 20) and to do it through returning to embodied awareness. 'How then do we get back to place? In the very way by which we are always already there — *by our own lived body*' (1996: 21, italics in original). This new and yet old paradigm of how we regard place and Nature is apt for a study of festival, of performance, of ritual, as other theorists here are shown to agree. These all are embodied forms of experiencing place in its personal, intimate forms: as are home, the food of home, the costumes we wear on the festival day and the actions we carry out on that day. Casey writes of the power of the senses in relation to intimate bonds with place: 'Not only is the sensuous senseful, it is also placeful' (Casey, 1996: 19). Casey's thought often returned to me as the fieldwork analysis unfolded. His ethnographic studies relate how 'wisdom sits in places', as his colleague Basso's fieldwork terms this. Drawing from a phrase in Heidegger, Casey describes the way that place is never empty space, but is a receptacle of energies, of stories, of history, and is active. 'Places also gather experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts' (Casey, 1996: 24; Knott, 2005b:160). The fieldwork chapters demonstrate this theory through the participants' stories.

2.3 Deep ecology and 'depth ecology'

Extending the larger sense of community to humans and non-humans (or more-than-human Nature) extends personhood, in Milton's theories. This extended and heightened sense of place can lead one to concepts discussed by philosophers in deep ecology and related ecological discourses. The 'Ecological Self' is a term and concept said to have been coined by Arne Naess. It is applied in deep ecology to that extended sense which expands beyond our own body with its smaller sense of self, ideally to encompass the world (Naess, 1993). In some individuals sense of place can deepen, perhaps in some ways of regarding it, radicalise, to merge their own identity with Nature through biophilia, or what some have called 'biocentrism' (Kohák, 2000: 84-85; Milton, 2002: 5). Milton, like Naess and Kohák, has seen this as a key to how and why some become advocates and activists for Nature, through accepting our human membership in a biocentric community of equal rights which deserves equal respect (Kohák, 2000: 86-101; Milton, 2002: 110-119).

Kohák (2000) offers a thorough and extensive discussion of many of the writers and philosophies that are among the most prominent thinkers in post-modern environmental philosophy. It is interesting to note, however, how he differentiates his theories from Naess' deep ecology by introducing a nuanced term, 'depth ecology' (Kohák, 2000: 114-122). While admiring Naess' and Session's deep ecology principles greatly (116), he makes the distinction that deep ecology has kept human beings ultimately divorced, 'alienated' in Kohák's term (118), from life. He sees this as true even for those like deep ecologists who wish for greater union: 'Simply because our critical reason, our reflective thought separated us from our innermost common I, so basic to all beings' (Kohák, 2000: 119). This is where, in the

arguments made here, grounded practices like performance, like ritual come in — i.e. to keep humanity embodied and grounded in real experience, in life details, and not working from dichotomising theoretical stances. This view has already emerged in Casey and others discussed above, and will be explored further in feminist critical work below.

Deep ecology is not well-known in Italy, although it is studied in certain university departments and milieu. However, some of the language of deep ecology is the languaging of relationality. In Italy, as in much of the developed and urban post-modern world, deep rapport with and awareness of the land and its inhabitants can seem rare. Sometimes it is not rare, but is unexpressed, or expressed in different ways and with different means. (Part of my methodological and hermeneutic journey was this realisation.) A number of the fieldwork participants spoke of a profound relationship with place and Nature, which could be termed biocentric, as later chapters will discuss. Certainly the classical Mediterranean view of *genius loci* was commonly understood. When one is profoundly sensitive to a spirit of place, or as Graham Harvey has termed them in the plural, *genii loci*, then the spirits of place may emerge as ‘whatever other-than-human people may be thought to be nearby’ (Harvey, 1997:113). A sense of wonder, a sense of the supernatural or perhaps even of the numinous can emerge from the feelings one receives in or about a place, feelings evoking the *numen* or divine spirit of a place. This concept from the classical Mediterranean world, while not identical to sense of place, helped me to communicate with participants, as the following chapter on methodology discusses.

2.4 Dwelling perspectives that help to weave the world

Tim Ingold's critical work has had a significant impact on this thesis. In his discussions of 'a dwelling perspective' (Ingold, 2000: 5; 153-188) he discusses the influences on his work from thinkers such as Heidegger (as Naess has likewise), as well as Geertz, Durkheim, and others whose ideas on dwelling in an environment or landscape helped to inspire him. His arguments on 'The temporality of a landscape' (1993: 152-174; 2000: 189-208) offer various themes of importance here on time and place. Four themes of Ingold's in particular apply to my own epistemology and process here. One is the concept of the relational epistemology that ties humans and non-humans together, seen already in Milton and others above. Ingold began to review his ideas on relationships between humans and non-human animals in an earlier article on reindeer husbandry (Ingold, 1974). He sees our bonds with land as relational, a way of keeping cultural memory alive through 'a practice of remembering, embedded in the perception of the environment' (2000: 148). For Ingold, 'reality is relational' and 'kinship is geography' (149). These concepts apply to Italy where one's bonds with a town or a festival ties one to place not only through the relationships in the town and in the family, but through the memories of history stored in that place, akin to Casey's idea that 'places gather' (1996: 24; 38).

A second theme of his, which forms part of my theoretical framework, is the 'poetics of dwelling' (Ingold, 2000). Ingold applies this concept to ways in which indigenous cultures live in the world, deeply conscious of the life around them in a relational way, learning or maintaining memory, history and tradition through their awareness of Nature. He sees this poetics of dwelling as a necessary ground for science.

My conclusion, to the contrary, is that the scientific activity is always, and necessarily, grounded in a poetics of dwelling. Rather than sweeping it under the carpet, as an embarrassment, I believe this is something worth celebrating, and that doing so will also help us to do better science (Ingold, 2000: 110).

Milton's work discusses this argument as well, defying common notions that loving Nature is a poor basis for advocacy. My argument is that festival and ritual demonstrate an embodied 'poetics of dwelling', and their theories on this point have influenced my thinking. In addition to poetics of dwelling, however, it is important to maintain an awareness of the often related politics of dwelling, as Milton's work does, and as this thesis endeavours to do. This point is discussed more in detail below in section 2.11.

A third significant concept is Ingold's demonstration of the agency of place and of the potential for communication with a natural place or phenomenon. These are not concepts foreign to many European regions, while still being perhaps outside the conventional paradigms of discussion. His discussion of how 'we move along with' the world in our lives, our development, our process (2000: 200-201) may state a less radical view of how humans can be so deeply affected by the world that they may perceive place as having agency. This perception is intertwined with the epistemology of dwelling. It is illustrated by stories from his fieldwork with the Ojibwa, the Inuit and other nations (Ingold, 2000: 11; 112-119; 150). These theories are discussed in the following section 2.5 in correlation to the theories of place agency which figure significantly in the thesis. Ingold explains that a dwelling perspective gives one a very different view of a landscape from —my example — a more transient North American whose home changes every five years. This perspective expresses the traditional Italian view, where a Tuscan vineyard owner can look at a field and see where his ancestors made wine three centuries ago; or a Piedmont farmer can point to the church where his ancestors four centuries ago were baptised. In Ingold's words this is

a 'dwelling perspective', according to which the landscape is constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves (2000: 189; 1993: 152).

My fieldwork clearly depicts how festivals likewise offer this kind of testimony to relationship and rapport with land through the 'language', foods and symbols of the festival. The dwelling perspective they demonstrate forms a bridge between humanity and Nature, between society and place — the bridge this thesis demonstrates.

The fourth component of Ingold's mirrored in this thesis is his metaphor of weaving. In his 2000 work he discusses weaving in-depth, in basketry and other art forms (Ingold, 2000: 339-348). Ingold draws the metaphorical parallels to life and dwelling, showing how we may weave the world into being with our actions.

Dwelling in the world, in short, is tantamount to the ongoing, temporal interweaving of our lives with one another and with the manifold constituents of our environment. The world of our experience is, indeed, continually and endlessly coming into being around us as we weave (Ingold, 2000: 348).

Ingold also discusses shamanism, magical perceptions of Nature, and symbolism in depth. Such topics resonated throughout my fieldwork, as it uncovered beliefs, customs and festivals that are unknown and unstudied outside of Italy (Salvetti, 2004, 2007; Zucca, 2004). Similar critical work carried out by Ingold in Australia and North America (Ingold, 2000: 102-106; 112-115) offers theories recalling that from Basso regarding his work in America (1996: 53-90). My fieldwork in Italy has searched out and delved into cases where such epistemologies are evident — a unique sort of relational epistemology where place can be interpreted as entering into relationship with human communities. The relationality with place and Nature that certain fieldwork participants expressed recalled Ingold's statement on animism: 'the animic world (is) dialogical' (2000: 114).

2.5 Ecologies of place-power, of thing-power

The theme of agency has great significance here for the fieldwork analysed in later chapters, and is a key part of the theoretical structure framing this thesis. Barron's writings in relation to a mountain in southern Italy, the Majella Massif, demonstrate the power a mountain can exert over human beings. The Massif elicits awe, reverence and fear in local inhabitants (Barron, 2006: 368-370) and is venerated to the point of being deified: '...it is feared for the storms that come from it; it is almost worshipped by the Abruzzesi, but it is also loved' (Barron, 2006: 369). Ingold discusses how North American Ojibwa people believe the thunderclaps are the voice of thunder speaking to them (Ingold, 2000: 102-106). In a passage that captures the relationship many cultures and philosophies can have with Nature, Ingold writes: '...the Ojibwa lifeworld is polyglot, inhabited by manifold beings each with their own particular pattern of speech' (Ingold, 2000: 106).

Jane Bennet describes her view of materiality and agency with the term 'thing-power' (2004); she inspired me to coin the phrase 'place-power' for my fieldwork observations. However, the two terms are in essence the same in Bennet's ontology, where she writes that we are 'walking, talking minerals' which share in the '*elan vital*' of the material world around us (Bennet, 2004: 359-360). She argues that we must acknowledge the thing-power materiality constantly affecting us in order to stem the 'violent *hubris* of Western philosophy' (Bennet, 2004: 349, italics in original). There is much affinity between Bennet's theories and my own, generally, but in particular in regard to the desire to affect the debate on place and demonstrate our profound need for community with place and Nature.

Like Thoreau, I hope to enhance the receptivity to thing-power by writing about it, by giving an account of the thingness of things that might enable me to feel it more intensely. I pursue this project in the hope of fostering greater recognition of the agential powers of natural and artifactual things, greater awareness of the dense web of their connections with each other and with human bodies, and finally, a more cautious, intelligent approach to our interventions in that ecology (Bennet, 2004: 349).

Bennet's article draws inspiration from many theorists, classical, modern and late modern. Her theories of materiality extend the meanings of ecology to include all material, and terms it 'thing-power ecology', where 'place is a dynamic flow of matter-energy that tends to settle into various bodies, bodies that join forces, make connections, form alliances' (Bennet, 2004: 365). In this regard, Bennet's thing-power ecology is a relational theory that supports my arguments on the power of a place influencing a festival and vice-versa through poetics of dwelling. Her views of thing-power also extend to some of my fieldwork observations on the materiality observed in at least two of my fieldwork cases.

Another theorist whose terminology and critical thought in this area is influential is Matthew Watson. He uses performance terminology to record how people engage relationally with place and describes his field studies in two Nature reserves in England.

This (...) grapples with changing notions of place, arguing that place, if it is seen as relationally performed, can enjoy a revitalization that incorporates suggestions of flows, mobility and hybridity of meaning. Using vocabulary of performance enables an alternative notion of place – as an emergent effect of a complex mix of relations incorporating human subjects and agential non-human Nature (Watson, 2003: 145).

Ingold has influenced Watson's thought as well, as has Heidegger, and also Latour (reviewed below). Watson argues that places are dynamic and can be seen as hybrids that are not static (2003:155). Like Ingold's theory of the 'taskscape' (2000: 195-197), place is for Watson 'an emergent effect of practices that bring a diversity of relationships into the moment of interaction between a person and the materiality of a site' (Watson, 2003:155). Barron, Bennet and Watson's views articulate the potential that festival and ritual have to embody and

perform place, building significant links and bridges among political theory, philosophy and ecology.

2.6 Wellbeing and identity as shown through eco-psychology

Eco-psychology is the field of study examining how human minds and psyches can be affected by Nature, often very profoundly, and is an area of Western psychology developed in the last thirty years. Examinations of sense of place are integral today in many studies of eco-psychology (Eyles and Williams, 2008). As Naess is for deep ecology, Tuan and Relph for topophilia and sense of place studies, Theodore Roszak is one of the founders of eco-psychology (Roszak, Gomes and Kanner, 1995; Roszak, 1993). For some, in the creative arts or in therapeutic professions, Sense of place is deeply intertwined with psychological health, with sense of self and with one's personal sense of identity (Austin-Zacharias, 2004; DeMiglio and Williams, 2008; Hild, 2006; Ward and Styles, 2003). Many engaged with eco-psychology feel that a loss of sense of place can lead to a profound crisis of identity (Austin-Zacharias, 2004: 795; DeMiglio and Williams, 2008: 15-27; Hild, 2006: 13). DeMiglio and Williams articulate their view of sense of place and explore with thoroughness the psychological states that can arise from loss of sense of place (2008: 15-27). Psychologist Carl Hild has studied Inupiat traditional knowledge for various decades, and from his studies he describes sense of place as healing in that it provides 'a feeling of well-being' (Hild, 2006: 12). His article offers yet another term for the profound connection with Nature or even sense of reverence one may hold for especially honoured or sacred sites, 'geopiety' (Hild, 2006: 17). He quotes from Schaaf saying: 'Land for the Inupiat is an entity much like a person. From this viewpoint the earth itself can speak...' (Schaaf, 2004: 111, cited in Hild, 2006: 16). Hild takes this form of deep, or (probably better said) depth ecology, a step further in his

research that documents the reciprocity that some cultures share with the Earth. This theme of reciprocity returns in sections below, specifically regarding Italy.

A relevant example of eco-psychology, sense of place and community festivals is offered by Dolores LaChapelle, theorising on ritual and healing (1995). LaChapelle discussed various indigenous societies around the world whose health seems, according to various scholars, to stem from their deep relationship with ritual, place and Nature (LaChapelle, 1995: 57-58). In contrast she argues that a Western industrialised nation can maintain its health through community ritual and festival, using the example of Siena, Italy with its famous annual horse race, the *Palio*.

Siena, Italy with a population of about fifty-nine thousand people, has the lowest crime rate of any Western city of comparable size. Delinquency, drug addiction and violence are virtually unknown (LaChapelle, 1995: 59-60).

LaChapelle's points about the health of the community in Siena are supported by more current studies done by Gerald Parsons, as well as other scholars who have also focused on Siena's *Palio*, such as Wolfgang Drechsler (2006). Parson's work is significant here, in his studies of Siena's centuries-old devotion to the Madonna, the case for civil religion and the connection he establishes between the effect of the *Palio*'s intense community building — despite equally intense rivalry among the districts or teams involved in the creation of the horse race, the *contrade* — and the health of the Siennese society. He agrees with LaChapelle's observation and writes that '...it is often argued that this is also one of the reasons why the Siennese maintain a strikingly courteous manner and the city enjoys a very low crime rate' (Parsons, 2004:118). Drechsler describes Siena as being 'for a city of its size (...) almost ridiculously safe' (Drechsler, 2006: 101), and having 'ostensibly, the highest

social capital of any city of that size' (100). This chapter examines more of the points developed by Parsons further on, regarding civil religion and community ritual in Siena.

The earthy relationship with sense of place in Siena is evidenced in the evocative Siennese saying which LaChapelle quotes. (Its existence and use are supported by my own inquiries in Siena (26 October 2007).)

About one week before the day of the *Palio* race workers from the city of Siena begin to bring yellow earth (*la terra* from the fields outside Siena) and spread it over the great central square (the *Campo*) thus linking the city with its origins in the earth of its *place*. In fact, during the course of the year when someone needs to be cheered up, the sad person is told not to worry because soon there will be "*la terra in piazza*" (earth in the square) (LaChapelle, 1995: 61).

Parsons also notes the deep Siennese connection with the actual dirt from a specific location: when a baby is born, to mark or claim him or her for a particular *contrada*, the earth from the specific family *contrada* is placed beneath the mother and baby's bed in the hospital (Parsons, 2004: 121). LaChapelle examines themes similar to those studied by Milton and also by Ingold, such as what dwelling in the land really means, and how we can learn to communicate at all levels with our fellow inhabitants in a location — including between the human and the nonhuman in the natural environment (LaChapelle, 1995: 62). She sees ritual as key to this communication. This thinking applies well to the culture of festivals and traditions observable in late modern Italy: through ritual an eco-psychological healing element emerges as we become embodied, in place, finding and locating ourselves. In addition to the eco-psychological element in this thesis' exploration of sense of place, the critical precedents cited for the form of analysis utilised, the 'Scale of Engagement', in some cases came from the therapeutic world. Part four of this chapter discusses these theorists.

PART TWO: THE FESTIVAL, THE RITUAL AND THE OTHER

2.7 Modernity, networks and festival hybridity

Some scholars have hypothesised whether Italy is a modern country or not. Giulio Sapelli speculates provocatively that Italy and other parts of southern Europe are ‘postmodern without ever having been modern’ due to their late industrialisation (Sapelli, 2008). Bruno Latour’s theories would assert that none of us have ever been modern or postmodern. He believes that this idea is an illusion, as is the duality created in the split between Nature and culture (Latour, 1993: 100-103; 104-105). We are all hybrids, and Nature is still enchanted. The modernists and antimodernists have made a mistake, Latour tells us (1993: 114-116; 128-129). Italian festival likewise can tell us this.

In Italy the social is fundamental, *campanilismo* or fierce local patriotism arises from the local landmark as symbol, and likewise sense of place is often socially rooted. As one farmer in Nuto Revelli’s vast collection of interviews with Italian peasants in Piedmont said: ‘The land held the family together. Land and social are bound together’ (Revelli, 1977, 1997: 290). Latour has hypothesised that this could be said of all humanity (1993). The Latour theories which have principally impacted this thesis hinge on certain points: that the dualism of post-Enlightenment thinking is an illusion, creating a schism between Nature and culture (Latour, 1991:98-99), one that really does not exist, except in certain Western cultures. He goes so far as to state that: ‘Cultures — different or universal — do not exist, any more than Nature does’ (104). That statement appears more radical than when taken in context. He explains it by the previous point, in italics: ‘... the very notion of culture is an artifact created by bracketing Nature off’ (104). For Latour our Western thinking, which prides itself on its concepts steeped in what it sees as modernity and postmodernity, are illusory. He sees our ontology as

similar to that of a South American Indian nation from the Amazon region of Ecuador, the Achuar (Latour, 1991:14; 42), or for that matter like any culture that we might conceive of as premodern. These theories are pertinent to my fieldwork, for as mentioned, there are those theorists on Italy such as Sapelli, who see Italy as not being modern.

Another premise of Latour's principal philosophies is the concept of hybrids. This is a description of the 'nonhumans' or the 'mixtures between entirely new types of beings, hybrids of nature and culture' (10-11). (In this reference, discussing hybrids, Latour does not capitalise Nature; however he does when referring to 'limitless Nature' (9) in the sense of the natural world.) For Latour, hybrids of culture and Nature have agency, and can do things we have rejected, or overlooked, in modern ways of thinking. They exist in conjunction with a third key premise of Latour's, that of the network (117-122). If one were to apply Latour's theories to Italy, one can find a number of examples of his ideas at work: in regards to relationship, to hybrids of culture and to networks. This thesis' fieldwork in the rural areas of Lombardy and Piedmont demonstrates that Italian folk beliefs and lived religion exhibited in festival have a materiality which sometimes attributes agency to inanimate objects. These are hybrids in Latourian language, exhibiting 'thing power', as Bennet calls such agency (Bennett, 2004). The style of ritualised communal practice and belief in the case studies from my fieldwork are tied profoundly to place. This is further demonstration of the case stating how we Westerners, for all our 'violent hubris' (Bennet, 2004: 349), are not actually modern. Such a statement can apply even to a Western European nation like Italy with one of the highest rates of industrialisation, as Sapelli has theorised (1995, 2008). (It is interesting to note that for all the ubiquitous discussions of 'Italian food', only 2% of Italy's GNP is from agriculture today (CIA factbook 2009).)

Latour evokes environmental philosophy when he writes of how we have convinced ourselves that the world is disenchanted (1991:114-115). However, Italy (and many other places for Latour) has not allowed its world to become disenchanted — on the contrary, as many a city or small village's legends illustrate, as the local festivals offering embodiment of place and community show, the world is still very much enchanted. My fieldwork chapters will give specific examples of these beliefs in today's Italy.

Moderns were always struck by the diffuse aspect of active or spiritual forces in other so-called premodern cultures. Nowhere were pure matters, pure mechanical forces, put into play. Spirits and agents, gods and ancestors, were blended in at every point. (...) Now if there were no immanence, if there are only networks, agents, actants, we cannot be disenchanted (Latour, 1991:128).

This leads me to point at Italy as an example of Latour's discussions on network theory, and how even the longest network is ultimately local (117-122).

Is a railroad local or global? Neither. It is local at all points, since you always find sleepers and railroad workers, and you have stations and automatic ticket machines scattered along the way (117).

Perhaps Latour means 'neither and both'. Like the festival, the railroad is a good example of a hybrid. Latour's theory of social networks is illustrated by the networks of relationality and reciprocity that define life in Italy. To continue with the example of the railroad, one could say the railroad is always a local network, and would literally be relational in Italian culture and mindset: someone will undoubtedly have family and friends who can help as one moves along it. Sapelli has discussed such theories of relationality in economic terms (Sapelli, 1995). Finally, my thesis of the festival being a bridge over the dualistic schism that modernist ideologies have created between Nature and culture is a Latourian device. It draws essentially upon networks in order to exist, and it is not modern. The festival itself is a hybrid

as are the components that make it up: masques, costumes, place, constructions, processions, lived religion.

2.8 Time at the fair: polychronic and heterotopic temporality

In my theory of festival as a bridge between Nature and culture, the festival becomes an example of the Latour hybrid, which crosses the gap, closes the abyss, between pre and postmodern, between Self and Other. One of the means by which the ritual and festival does this is through the meeting of diverse temporal spaces and perceptions. A term used by archaeologists Christopher Witmore (2006: 15) and also Kenneth Lymer (2009, 2010: 4, 10) joins the previously explored theories here, in order to demonstrate the temporality of festival: ‘polychronic’, a setting where different time frames and senses of time come together. Polychronic space allows for past eras to seep into the present. Witmore uses the term ‘percolate’, to describe how different temporal settings, like coffee and water, meet and blend together in such a way as to change each other’s consistency and potency: ‘building upon a non-modernist notion of time where entities and events quite distant in a linear temporality are proximate through their simultaneous entanglement and percolation...’ (Witmore, 2006: 267). His exploration of such theories of temporality examines the challenge of the archaeologist to remain open to the world in all its multiple sensory materiality (2006: 274-276). Witmore cites both Ingold and Latour in discussions of how past and present can percolate together when we allow ourselves non-linear awareness. Ingold theorises on how we may feel a landscape in his study of Bruegel the Elder’s *The Harvesters* (Ingold, 2000: 201-203), and likewise Witmore is interested in how to rediscover ‘bodily engagement’ with place (Witmore, 2006: 269) through sound in particular. He discusses that it is also through sensitivity to other sensory properties that the archaeologist may escape what he terms ‘the

tyranny of ocularcentrism' (Witmore, 2006: 282). Witmore's theories return in later chapters here, and his thought weaves through this thesis, as he draws from thinkers influential in this thesis, such as Foucault, Latour and Ingold. Like Bennet, reviewed above in section 2.5 (as well as in other chapters), he urges us to not deny 'the action of things', lest we fall back into 'exploitative and dominating tendencies of the West' (Witmore, 2006: 282). Lymer draws from Witmore in examining the temporal percolations and polychronic power of landscape found in rock art parks in Central Asia (Lymer, 2009; 2010: 2-4; 9-10). These theories return below in section 2.8.1 and also in Chapter five, which both discuss the significant power and temporality of rock art landscapes.

Michel Foucault introduced the medical term 'heterotopia' into non-medical discourse, speaking of 'other places', sites which are real 'emplacements', found universally in world cultures, but which challenge and invert our perceptions of 'normalcy' (Sohn, 2008: 46-47). These places are not the fictive dreams or illusions of a utopia, (although there are heterotopias of illusion, discussed further below), but are sites in which 'all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted' (Foucault, 1986: 24, cited in Rodman, 2003: 211; also Foucault, 1998: 178; Foucault, 1966). Heterotopias are 'a constant of every human group' (1998: 179). It was in 1966 that he first discussed the term and the six principles of his spatial theory (Foucault, 1966; Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 13; Sohn, 2008: 41-43). In an interview on French radio that same year he spoke of how children know these 'counter spaces' or 'other spaces': the games at the bottom of the garden, the Indian-style tents where one plays, the forest of hide and seek, the parents' bed when they are away, and so forth (Foucault, 1966; Davis, 2010: 662). (A typical Foucauldian note, demonstrating his interest in themes of power structures and punishment, is that he comments that this is a transgressive play-place, where the child knows he or she will

be punished if discovered.) As for the adult world which also organises heterotopic spaces, he chose to delineate as examples libraries, museums, brothels, prisons, psychiatric hospitals, homes for the elderly, cemeteries, colonies, ships, gardens, and also the carnival or festival (Foucault, 1998: 178-183; 1966). In the first lecture and interview, followed posthumously by an article (1967, 1998, 2000), Foucault termed this a new science of ‘heterotopology’ and set out six principles describing these emplacements in detail.

- 1) The first principle determines that the heterotopia is found in all cultures, but is still very diverse. He broke these into two types: that of the crisis heterotopia and that of the ‘deviant’. Although the first was found more typically in early societies or indigenous societies, with their rites and houses set apart for adolescents, women giving birth, and so forth, today we have boarding schools separating off adolescents, some of which are same-sex schools, and homes for the elderly — ‘rest homes’ and assisted living. His concept of the deviant heterotopia exists today as in the past, in the form of prisons, psychiatric hospitals, rehabilitation centres and so forth. Subsequent writers have added other late modern heterotopic places to this category, such as the refugee camp, underground tunnels where the homeless dwell, rehabilitation centres for the rich, and so on (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 7-8; De Boeck, 2008: 297-308).
- 2) The second principle illustrates how, despite being universals, heterotopias can be altered by certain societies or certain groups to operate in a very different way. They are still universal, with a function that is precise and related to us all; yet they can be made to function differently depending on the society and culture. Foucault offers the example of the cemetery, in the sense that from the nineteenth century onward it was no longer attached to the churchyard, in the midst of the village or town, but was relegated to the edges of town (Foucault, 2000: 180-181). Foucault uses the term ‘other city’ for these ‘dark dwellings’ (181). A contemporary illustration of how this second principle can

apply is found through additional societal uses of the cemetery located on the city's periphery. In Milan, I observed over three years there, that the city's primary monumental cemetery had become a place of illegal encampments for Rom communities. Filip De Boeck has written poignantly of Kinshasa, Congo, and the deterioration of civil society there, causing some to call Kinshasa itself a city of the dead. De Boeck writes that 'the country in its totality has become zombified' (De Boeck, 2008: 297-299). Thus, De Boeck's research demonstrates how young people there 'design an alternative political and moral landscape' (306), by taking over the cemetery and many funeral processions. They live in the cemetery, sleep and have sex on the tombs, dance on them naked and so forth, showing in carnivalesque, and sometimes violent, forms their 'criticism of the world they live in' (De Boeck, 2008: 306). The cemetery has become an illustration of a heterotopia which offers potential for life on the edge, with potentially extreme societal reversals.

- 3) The third principle is the juxtaposition of 'several emplacements that are incompatible, contradictory in themselves, or unrelated to each other' (181). He cites the theatre, the cinema and in particular, the garden as easily identifiable examples of this principle. From Foucault's description, one gets the sense of how the macrocosm may be represented in the microcosm, perhaps incongruously at times, on the stage, the screen or in the perfectly designed and sculpted garden.
- 4) Principle four is that time behaves unconventionally in a heterotopia, becoming 'heterochronic'. One example Foucault gives is of museums and libraries, where time 'accumulates indefinitely' (1998: 182; 1966). However, the second example of this principle is that of 'temporal discontinuities' or breaks with traditional time. Some are 'chronic' — temporally uncommon — in a 'futile, transitory and precarious' way. Among these examples Foucault names the festival, fair and carnival. He adds also the

holiday resort village, such as (in my view) a Club Méditerranée. Scholars debate on how to translate this, whether heterotopia of festival, of festival time or of festivity (Foucault, 1967 in Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 20; 26, n. 25). Whichever the translation, the theory of a break in mundane or conventional temporality and relations in the festival heterotopia is relevant in this thesis.

- 5) Heterotopic emplacements in this fifth principle require some kind of opening and closing that isolates them. However, they are still penetrable and thus this gives them a kind of attainable exclusiveness. Foucault cites military barracks, saunas and public baths; rituals of various kinds, and the American motel where people can be closed in, sheltered, for (perhaps illicit) sexual liaisons without being observed. There are many more one could add: the American fraternity or sorority on many university campuses springs to mind, with their versions of secret adolescent societies and initiations; clubs of different kinds, such as the suburban country club with its exclusive membership, but which is prominently visible to the public.
- 6) Finally, his six principles conclude with those spaces ‘not of illusion but of compensation’ (Foucault, 1998: 184), where life is highly regulated, organised and regimented. He finds the ultimate example in the New World colonies such as those created by the Jesuits in South America and the English North American Puritan colonies. Foucault adds brothels and in particular the ocean-going ship as clear examples of this principle of heterotopic places.

The fourth heterotopic principle in particular is pertinent to this thesis. In this time of ‘temporal discontinuity’ the inverted, perhaps even contested, realities of the heterotopia allow for a place and time where people ‘are in a kind of absolute break with their traditional

time' (Foucault, 1998: 182). To return to Latour's theories, the ultimate hybrid is the heterotopic place, whichever or whatever it may be, for as Foucault described heterotopias they are 'emplacements that have the curious property of being linked to all other emplacements... spaces which are linked with all others' (1998: 178). Thus they are, in the Latourian as well as the Foucauldian sense, linked in a network of relations. Regarding the fourth principal's use of 'heterochronic', to unpack terms more thoroughly, my interpretation is that the terms heterochronic and polychronic are not interchangeable; however, they can be synchronous and synergetic. Heterochronic denotes a multiple and diverse perception of temporality, which includes a break from 'normal time' and from the relations within that temporality. Polychronic refers to how the past and present can be interanimated and intermingled. Chapter five's fieldwork accounts will illustrate these terms.

My argument is that the altered relations and temporality of the festival can offer both a polychronic and heterochronic space — past and present percolating together, in non-ordinary moments, but which are real and related to other sites in other places or in society. The talk in which Foucault set out these principles and theories first in some translations very properly is entitled 'Other Spaces'. The 1966 radio interview clearly describes them as 'other': 'these other places'; 'spaces that are totally other'. For my work this is intriguingly apt, as my thesis argues that in the festival heterotopia, sense of place, the Other and the *numen*, the Spirit of Place as perceived in sense of place, have the opportunity to be acknowledged and to manifest through the festival ritualisation. It is very likely that Foucault did not intend his 'other places' to be used in such a context, despite the idea that heterotopias are places of inverted and contested perspectives and dynamics. Some writers have argued that, although the concept of heterotopia has become widely used and influential in a variety of disciplines in the two decades since Foucault's death, he did not develop his heterotopia theories clearly

(Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 4; Cenzatti, 2008: 75). As Dehaene and De Cauter remind readers, ‘the lecture remained unpublished until 1984’ (2008: 4). However, as can happen in many cases, his theories developed lives of their own and grew beyond his usage and his life, becoming widely used in many contexts. My use of this theory is to underscore my argument that in the ‘other space’ of the festival, with its inverted perceptions and special temporality, new awareness may emerge.

Various scholars in the area of contemporary Pagan studies have examined how theories of heterotopia and of power inversion or gender challenging relate to the newly created phenomenon of the Pagan festival. Indeed the Pagan festival, particularly those remote and in more isolated natural places, is an apt example of powerfully heterotopic and polychronic temporality, as Sarah Pike discusses in detail in her 2001 work. ‘Neopagan festivals are marginal sites, or “heterotopias”, to borrow Michel Foucault’s term’ (Pike, 2001: 234). In addition to Foucault, Pike attributes other scholars writing in the field today with having helped her ‘understanding of festivals as “places apart”’ (234). In her Pagan festival fieldwork, Pike’s participants made the distinction between the festival world and what they termed ‘mundania’ (Pike, 2001: 18-40). Their vision of the festival world was that of a mythical realm seen as ‘Faerie’ and of ‘magical otherworlds’ that ‘makes them “liminal destinations”’ (2001: 20). There are many distinct differences with the study I have carried out in Italy, given that most of the festivals researched here are traditional cultural, calendrical or agricultural fairs, and some are actually urban. However, in the case of the Milan ‘Celtic New Year’, some of Pike’s theories do apply, given that there was a Pagan community involvement in Celtic New Year. Additionally, in the case of Andrista’s *Badalisc*, Paroldo’s Saint Martin’s Summer and Milan’s Celtic New Year, there is a certain sense of ‘pilgrimage’ for the participants. ‘The separation of the festival world from mundania is also

accomplished by making festival attendance a pilgrimage. Neopagans often journey to far-away places when they go to festivals, and they see this journey as a pilgrimage or rite of passage that will transform them' (Pike, 2001: 27). My argument is that there is often a transformational quality to the festival experience, even when it is less removed from 'mundania', to use Pike's term. Part of this is due not only to the experiences of the festival itself, but due to the location's 'place-power'. Returning to a specific place and community, experiencing once more a powerful sense of place, is an important element of the festivals Pike has studied in America, as well as those studied in this thesis. The heterotopic, heterochronic temporality of the festival is interanimated with place.

Like Pike, Rodman also explores Foucault's heterotopic time and its usefulness in ethnography in her study of place and the problem of empowerment (Rodman, 2003: 211-217). She discusses the challenge to the ethnographer and anthropologist in hearing, acknowledging and empowering the Other in our work. Celtic New Year in Chapter five on Lombardy gives evidence to Rodman's theories and their intersection with Foucault's theory of the heterotopic space. As the methodology chapter will discuss, her work also emphasises the importance of reflexivity in our perspective on Others, on power and on being aware of 'the interacting presence of different places and different voices' (212). In the opening that the heterotopic space provides, a portal for awareness, for a sense of the Other can arise — whether that Other is disenfranchised and silenced humanity, the ignored stories in the landscape, or Nature. In addition, we ourselves may be the Other whom festival allows to be acknowledged and liberated.

Neopagans attend festivals to experience a sense of belonging to a community, but it is in part their experience of marginality that unifies them. Festivals become meaningful places as extensions of participants' own feelings of marginality. Neopagans see themselves as social

outcasts and their Neopagan lifestyle as a rebellion against mainstream society (Pike, 2001: 31)

To foreshadow the fieldwork discussion, through this portal the festival bridge connects Pagans in Milan to each other and allows awareness of the possibility of an ancient *nemeton* — a central meeting place or a sacred grove for worship for the Celts and Gauls (Jones and Pennick, 1995: 81) — beneath the park and castle grounds, in the chaotic downtown of the city. The space of the festival creates a portal for Andrista villagers to have new awareness of their mountain landscape, and for Paroldo its witch-healer women. The fieldwork chapters will offer other expressions of place emerging through this fieldwork, due to the hybrid nature of the festival.

2.8.1 The unique agency and temporality of landscape art

Chapter five reveals the remarkable power of landscape in relation to one of the festivals discussed — Andrista in northern Lombardy is located in a region with vast areas of petroglyphs. Thomas Heyd asserts his perspective on Foucauldian heterotopic and heterochronic understandings in a volume on Foucault and the environment (Darier, 1999). Heyd's theories struck a particular chord due to my fieldwork experiences in Italy, as well as my experiences with and studies on Amerindian archaeological sites in North, South and Central America. Heyd discusses the 'Medicine Wheels', the name often given to boulder structures found on the northern plains of North America, which often also have petroglyphs and pictographs associated with them (Heyd, 1999:153-155). These are often generally referred to as rock art. Heyd analyses the Medicine Wheel boulder structures according to Foucault's six principles of 'heterotopology', described above in section 2.8, concluding that such rock art spaces can be called heterotopias.

These boulder structures juxtapose incompatible sites by bringing together a perspective on land of its original inhabitants and a perspective on land of its present exploitation-oriented users. In so far as the origin of these sites points to times receding indefinitely far into the past, reflection on them constitutes a slice or break in the ordinary perception of time (Heyd, 1999: 161).

My own theories agree with Heyd and also Lymer (2010) that rock art and ancient structures in the landscape, particularly circular or semi-circular like a Medicine Wheel or stone circle, can create a feeling of unusual temporality. I also agree that, similar to other kinds of art, experiencing such places can jar or transport us out of normal, mundane awareness — as he puts it, ‘unsettle us’ in some manner (Heyd, 1999: 161). Even the beauty of a Renaissance square can have heterotopic power, Heyd argues — a point to consider in the Milan festival fieldwork in and near *Piazza Duomo*. However, it is very interesting to consider how Heyd’s theories apply to the massive petroglyph parks covering Valcamonica in northern Italy. This is significant in my research since one of the most extensive areas of petroglyphs and pictographs in Italy — perhaps in Europe — lies near the festival researched in Andrista. In short, my work argues that people’s awareness of the petroglyph parks and use of the ancient symbols from them in the immediate area of the Andrista festival have contributed to the powerful place agency and added to the heterotopic impact of both the area, and the festival. The theme of place agency plays a fundamental role in the examination of sense of place here. The polychronic power of an honoured landscape manifests its enduring wisdom through art, artifacts, and so forth as shown by Lymer (2004, 2010), Heyd and others in this thesis. Lymer wrote, referring to Witmore’s theory of ‘percolation (2006):

The present is an aggregate mix derived from multiple times which do not follow strict linear relationships. Thus, we are able to move away from viewing the landscape as a monochronic object and acknowledge its many polychronic facets as various pasts still actively resonate within the realities of our various presents. (...) ... rock art sites are nodes in the landscape embodying temporal percolations of significant spaces (Lymer, 2010: 3-4).

This literature review returns to the significance of archaeology and to its uncovering of various cultures' engagement with landscape in Part four with Tilley et al, not in relation to heterotopia, but in relation to the scholars' methods of scaled analysis. Other later chapters return to these notions of non-linear, 'aggregate' temporalities as experienced in certain landscapes.

2.9 Ritual and liminality, ritual and festive time

Victor Turner is another prominent scholar in this area of study whose work must be acknowledged, due to his foundational theories on ritual, performance and festival. Turner wrote extensively on the distinction between ritual and theatre in differing societies, developed and not, separating the concept into two nuanced categories in his work, the liminal and the liminoid. He interpreted much of the Western world's postmodern and post-industrial festivals or ritual as liminoid (1982b: 33-41), in that they involved leisure time activities that were purely optional and voluntary, 'leisure genres'. However, unlike carnival culture (or many forms of Western entertainment), he did not see the liminal in tribal society as reversing the social order, on the contrary a tribal ritual was intended to support and reinforce not only social order, but cosmic order. Instead,

...supposedly "entertainment" genres of industrial society are often *subversive*, satirizing, lampooning, burlesquing, or subtly putting down the central values of the basic, work-sphere society, or at least selected sectors of that society. The word "entertain", incidentally is derived from O.F. *entretenir*, to "hold apart", that is to create a liminal or liminoid space in which performances may take place (41).

From the economic standpoint mentioned earlier, Turner also saw the liminoid as potentially including that which is bought and sold.

The *liminoid* is more like a commodity – indeed often *is* a commodity, which one selects and pays for – than the *liminal* (...) One *works* at the liminal, one *plays* with the liminoid (55, italics as in original).

Despite pages of careful elucidation of the nuances and subtleties distinguishing the two categories, ultimately Turner concedes that: 'In complex, modern societies both types coexist in a sort of cultural pluralism' (55). This thesis will conflate Turner's categories and use liminal and liminality in festival and ritual observations.

Turner's thought resonates with many theories in this thesis. Another area of intersection is in his discussion of the significant temporality of liminal spaces, which he has sometimes termed 'anti-temporality' (1982a: 243-265) in the ritual or theatrical community event. Turner did not use the term heterotopia, but his description of the 'social anti-structure' that can arise in 'ritual time' accords with some of the heterotopic spatial theory of Foucault. 'Liminality is a temporal interface whose properties partially invert those of the already consolidated order which constitutes any specific cultural "cosmos"' (Turner, 1982b: 41). He also uses the term 'sacred space time' for these 'subversive and ludic (or playful) events' (1982b: 27). A writer who brings not only Turner's, but also Foucault's, critical theories into contemporary studies is De Boeck, discussed above in section 2.8. He links Turner's thought with the profound inversions of life and destruction of social order that the Congolese youth have introduced into death rituals in Kinshasa, calling them 'very heterotopian, a Turnerian anti-structural moment quite common in a number of Central African rituals' (De Boeck, 2008: 306). Despite the decades since Victor Turner's death, like Foucault Turner's foundational work continues to inform ritual and festival theory, such as those in this thesis.

While delving into differing theories of festive time, one must acknowledge another renowned thinker in this field, Mikhail Bakhtin. The Russian philosopher, sociologist and literary scholar of the early twentieth century is well-known for his study on Rabelais, on

popular festival forms and on carnival reversal (Bakhtin, 1984). Italy's many festivals, discussed theoretically and historically, offer clear examples of Bakhtinian merriment, materiality, ribaldry, carnival reversal and occasionally even a hint of the violent festivities highlighted by Bakhtin. This is perhaps not unexpected, due to the mediaeval nature of many of Italy's festivals, which purposely bring forward to contemporary times the feast of fools, the Carnival, the carnivalesque and various other traditional forms of festive or 'gay time' (1984: 219) described by Bakhtin. It is also not surprising that many of Italy's festivals are still today linked to an ecclesiastic calendar, such as the local saints' days or in the case of Carnival, to Lent.

...carnival is the people's second life, organized on the basis of laughter. It is a festive life. Festivity is a peculiar quality of all comic rituals and spectacles of the Middle Ages. All these forms of carnival were also linked externally to the feasts of the Church (Bakhtin, 1984: 8).

This thesis examines various forms of materiality in Italy, and therefore it is appropriate to mention the mediaeval grotesque realism Bakhtin demonstrates in Rabelais. His grotesque realism emphasised the importance of the bodily, earthy elements of life — often to the point of being sexually graphic or scatological (Bakhtin, 1984: 18-19; 223-224). In a sense this correlates to the sensuously placeful elements of the festival fieldwork, illustrated in the following chapters. Reversals of authority in surprising manners are a key part of Bakhtinian carnival or festive time, and even in the grandly celebrated *Palio*, which section 2.14 reviews below, there are elements of popular festival reversals and grotesque realism. One example is that the horse has as much authority in a sense as the rider: the horse can win the race, even if the jockey has fallen off. Other examples in later sections specifically discuss critical work on the *Palio* and other Tuscan festivals. The fieldwork chapters five and six will delineate the direct correlations with Bakhtin's theories of reversal, of parody and laughter, and of festival gay time in nearly all of the thesis festival case studies.

2.10 Localising the sacred, sacralising the local

The debates about relationality, not only among human beings, but with space, location and Nature, return here through Kim Knott's work. Knott looks at how religion is located with the same careful scrutiny that Milton (2002) uses to examine the sources of love for Nature. Among other aspects of her 'spatial approach to the problem of locating religion' (2005b: 156), Knott studies the place, history and philosophy of all that is connected with the left hand in culture and religion (2005a). Many of her theories and approaches resonate with my work. In the case of her 2005 book, her examination of the topic of the left hand and its taboos, its marginalisation, tie in to this thesis' discussions of Nature and the Other. Nature, animals, women — as well as the poor or those in any way disenfranchised — all have been historically denigrated, relegated to a lower echelon of 'humanness' or personhood, and devalued in a dualistic and traditionally patriarchal view of the world. Knott uses the term 'reclaim' for late modern Western society's need to recognise those silenced and ignored.

This certainly involves the process of reclaiming that which has been dominated, undervalued and marginalised by a Western order informed by Greek and early Christian dualistic thought (Knott, 2005a: 168).

In other aspects of this theoretical framework, the intersection of Knott with the themes of this thesis is revealed in her introduction where she emphasises the importance of a spatial analysis of religion and the sacred.

The aim here is not to focus explicitly and exclusively on sites which proclaim to establish what is sacred or holy about such places. (...) My intention is rather to look closely at contemporary everyday spaces in order to discern the location of religion within them (...). By doing so, I think we shall see that there are no data that are irrelevant for the study of religion, and that there are no places in which religion may not, in some sense or other, be found (Knott, 2005a: 2).

As do many of the theorists discussed above, Knott enters into the characteristics of late-modernity, examining our relationships with time and with space, and with power structures

connected with these relationships with space. The resonances from Foucault are notable, and in the conclusion of her 2005 book Knott admits to being particularly indebted to Foucault (2005a: 234). Knott examines his work in the areas of power, history, secularity, time and spatial theory — including the talk and essay '*Des espaces autres*', discussed in section 2.8 (Foucault, 1998, 2000: 175-185; Knott, 2005a: 24; 31; Knott, 2005b: 160). In addition, Knott has explored feminist critical thought, such as that of Doreen Massey (2005b: 155-156), and reconsidered 'the primacy of place' (2005b: 155). She concludes that a move from place to space is in line with her more recent thought, as it is for Massey and other scholars. She developed a new approach, seeing that in late twentieth century thought, space was

...no longer confined to Cartesian concepts of the abstract and geometric, but was understood in configuration with time, as complex, dynamic and relational (2005b: 155-156).

Another theorist whose work has influenced Knott, as well as this thesis, is Casey. Knott discusses different concepts of time and space that are non-linear and alive, attributing Casey with bringing place 'out of hiding... as an open event' and revealing space as 'open and dynamic' (Knott, 2005a: 31). Space and place have 'active potential' (Knott, 2005a: 129), and 'affect agency in those who experience and participate in space'.

(Space) evokes practices, ideas, and sensual responses which are additional to those evoked by similar places, places in general, or by smaller parts of this place (Knott, 2005a: 129).

In her 2005 article Knott describes space as relational, social and multidimensional (2005b: 159-160). These diverse, and perhaps surprisingly embodied, capacities of space demonstrate why it is not only appropriate but 'extremely fruitful' in Knott's view for a methodology in the study of religion to take a spatial approach (2005b: 177).

Ronald Grimes likewise scrutinises what ritual is, asserts that it may be found in surprising places, and examines late modern ways of sacralising — such as in televising a festival or

ritual (2006: 9; 15; 33). In an intriguing 'take' on the concept of location and the sacred, Grimes' work agrees: ritual is found in all places, even the seemingly everyday or mundane (2006:12-13; 89). He asserts that we can discover ritual and a sense of the divine 'in quite ordinary details' and 'in utter ordinariness' (Grimes, 2006: 89). Grimes sees space as active in some cultures and not others, but prefers the term 'place', viewing it as more located and geographical. In this he differentiates his own theories from Smith, who demonstrates in his 'spatialized theory of ritual' that 'place acts', but 'metaphoric emplacement is more determinative than geographical place' (Grimes, 2006: 112). (Grimes is very specific, stating that Smith 'is indebted more to Durkheim and Eliade; I to Turner and van Gennep' (112).) My own views and theories resonate with Grimes in general — on ritual, on theatre, on performance, on activism — more so than with Smith. For example, Grimes' theories on performative ritual, on sacred space and on Nature are similar to my own, and his work will re-emerge in subsequent chapters in regards to the community festival/rituals in my fieldwork. In discussing how ritual can impact the world in profound and healing ways, Grimes demonstrates his own depth ecology. He quotes deep ecologist poet and activist Gary Snyder in regard to why ritual and performance can be truly transformative: 'Performance is currency in the deep world's gift economy' (Snyder, 1990: 75, cited in Grimes, 2006: 147). In other words, the performance, the ritual — in whatever form it may take — may actually 'earn the attention, the grace, and the forgiveness of the animals and plants and spirits, the council of all beings' (2006: 150-151). This is a poetic expression of how the festival/ritual can 'sacralise', even in seemingly mundane forms, connecting the more-than-human Other and the human community.

2.10.1 Making meaning through community festival/ritual

The concept that humans feel a need to make a meaningful world relates directly to the theories reviewed above — such as why people celebrate public rituals like the *sagre* and *feste*. Turner wrote that we create rituals and other community performances because we seek ‘to rest our restless minds in meaningfulness’ (1982a: 245). Humanity uses these moments to make a more meaningful world, in Knott's words, sometimes through a deep need for meaning and significance, in a world that has taken these away from a community, a people, a region.

Ritual is not an expression of or a response to 'the sacred'; rather something or someone is made sacred by ritual... divine and human, sacred and profane, are transitive categories; they serve as maps and labels, not substances (Smith, 1987:105; cited in Knott, 2005a: 101).

This mode of creating sacred time, which allows for heterotopic time to emerge, applies to the repetition of ritual, festival or any event that can ‘sacrate’ and create meaning through this event. The following assertion of Knott's relates to my arguments and observations.

...people sacralize themselves, others, objects, places. Ritual then becomes a central creative process by which people make a meaningful world that they can inhabit (Knott, 2005a: 101).

There is almost nowhere that exemplifies the theories of place agency and of community sacralising of place more than the British city of Glastonbury. Marion Bowman has written extensively on Glastonbury, and on nearby Bath as well, observing the forms of vernacular religious practices, rites and observances that take place in those cities (Bowman, 2007; 2006; 2005; 2004; 1998). Glastonbury is a notable example, perhaps only equaled by Jerusalem, of natural features in the landscape where historical sites and cultural celebrations have been passionately sacralised by practitioners of many and diverse religions. In Bowman's studies of the Holy Thorn Ceremony in Glastonbury, she notes that it is an important local tradition, primarily for locals and not created to attract tourists (Bowman, 2006: 133). Similarly my

fieldwork looks at festivals that are directed towards local people and communities, and influenced profoundly by the landscape. My thesis demonstrates that localised festivals can bring health in differing ways to communities, as well as developing or manifesting sense of place. Bowman's studies of the Holy Thorn Ceremony discuss how strife between the Anglican Church where the ceremony is held and alternative spirituality or other groups was smoothed somewhat in recent years through a new minister's opening the ceremony to non-church people (2006: 135). As Bowman demonstrates in Glastonbury, sense of place can be exemplified and heightened by community festivals, which often create a greater cohesiveness and shared sense of identity in the everyday community. The fieldwork in this thesis, such as the festivals in Andrista or in Paroldo, even in urban Milan, give further examples of how the intertwining agency of landscape, history and tradition in festivals which highlight the significance of a Tor (as in Glastonbury), a mountain or an ancient city settlement (as in Lombardy) can bring surprising results to a community.

2.11 Critical voices and caveats

The purpose of this section is to give voice to some reasons for which Heidegger, Foucault, Tuan and other theories of place and space can be thought problematic or controversial. Whether overtly describing concerns with feminism, social justice or environmental justice, this thesis has attempted to maintain awareness of women's experiences as well as that of other oppressed and marginalised populations.

To begin with, let us return to deep ecology. This branch of environmental philosophy, (discussed here in sections 2.2.1 and 2.3), along with other disciplines of twentieth century environmentalism, is in some regards related to the Romantic thought that evolved in

eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe and North America (Kline, 2000: 31-35; Roszak, 1992: 42-43). Carolyn Merchant's detailed environmental histories (1989, 2002, 2004) review Romanticism's influence on art, philosophy, literature and early forms of environmentalism. This movement could be seen as a logical reaction to industrial development in northern Europe and North America during those centuries (Bramwell, 1989: 6; 9; 23; Merchant, 1989: 250-256; Merchant, 2004: 133-137). However, while notions about the sanctity of Nature spread among elites and intellectuals, indigenous populations in areas under colonial rule or those undergoing North American westward expansion, were being subjected to military hegemony, oppression and annihilation (Merchant, 2004: 145-154). Chidester and Linenthal also review such histories in their discussions of sacred space in America (1995).

During the nineteenth century, for example, a romantic naturalism transferred a sacred web of sentiment from God to nature. (...) Some analysts have argued, however, that this nineteenth-century religious valorization of nature disguised the political, social and economic forces at work in the production of American space. On the one hand, romantic nature religion obscured the military conquest of American Indian societies that made natural environments available for appropriation by "Nature's Nation" (Chidester and Linenthal, 1995: 13).

Power dynamics and politics are an integral facet of place studies and place-based relationships. Knott has reviewed this, as well as others figuring importantly in this thesis. Chidester and Linenthal (1995) demonstrate the history of power struggles and contestations over sacred space using examples from America, as well as other nations. 'Sacred space is often, if not inevitably, entangled in politics' (1995: 15). As the citation above indicates, Chidester and Linenthal have argued that the romanticising of Nature in the nineteenth century sometimes obscured the injustices wreaked upon indigenous nations. They warn of the need for thorough analysis and avoidance of mystification in considering what is sacred space.

Attention to the contested character of sacred space might provide a necessary corrective to this analytical naivete, whether it takes the form of theological dogmatism or mystical

intuitionism, that holds out for a view of sacred space as simply “given” or “revealed” (1995: 17).

Such themes of politics, of mystification and of disputes over what may be considered a sacred place to one religion, community or political group return in Chapter five, on the Milan fieldwork.

Heidegger’s theories of dwelling are discussed in section 2.4, figuring into theories put forth by Ingold and others such as Naess. (They also enter into Chapter four’s festival theories.) In Heidegger’s tradition of the philosophical discipline of phenomenology (1962; 1982, 1988), he developed his theories of ‘*umwelt*’ (1982: 164-165). The term is drawn from early twentieth century ethologist and physiologist Jakob von Uexküll, and refers to the perceptions of the surrounding environment that each organism experiences (Bramwell, 1989: 56; Ingold, 2000: 154; 176-177). The notion of *umwelt* plays a part in the elaborated ‘poetics of dwelling’ which Ingold (2000), Watson (2003), Gray (2003) and others have discussed. The power and poetry of such theories notwithstanding, in her study of the origins of folklore Regina Bendix reviews the history of folklore’s involvement with National Socialism (Bendix, 1997: 156-7; 160-167). She also voices a concern with the ‘metaphysical lure’ of Heidegger’s phenomenology, reminding readers that Heidegger was a member of the National Socialist party (1997:19). She warns that one must keep in mind that ‘Heidegger’s writing is conditioned by and politically committed to the totalitarian time during which it was generated’ (19). Similarly, Val Plumwood is dismayed by the potentially exclusionary politics, as well as the lack of social justice concern, that she argues is wound up with another Heideggerian concept, ‘“*heimat*” or dwelling in “one’s place” or “homeplace”, the place of belonging’ (Plumwood, 2008:1). She offers a caveat to the environmental movement, as well as to all those who romanticise sense of place and their bonds with home.

Contemplation of the agency, power and mystery of places potentially has a lot to contribute to understanding our relationships to the earth (...). But unless further elaborated, I think place-based discourse is open to some very adverse interpretations, and its tendency to replace a more clearly focused body of ecological and environmental critique and awareness may become a matter for concern (2008: 2).

Plumwood urges that we must not hide from our impact on Others' stories and other places (those not perhaps of our own dwelling); we will then be more likely to remember what Plumwood calls the 'shadow places' of those less privileged. Many of these shadow places or 'denied places' are those whose lives and whose own 'places of attachment' we impact with our consumer choices, our developed world habits — in essence with our overall ecological footprint (Plumwood, 2008: 2-3; 7).

Critiques from Gillian Rose (1993) offer insightful perspectives on the early exclusiveness of place studies, the Western discipline of geography having been originally a male domain. The language used by earlier theorists reveals this masculine identity, dualism and bias, according to Rose and others (Rose, 1993: 1-11). Consequently, many traditional forms of language regarding place, and certain male theorists on place, such as Heidegger, Tuan, Relph and others, have been critiqued by feminists as 'masculinist' and thereby not acknowledging the struggles of women regarding place, community and identity. Phenomenology here has been criticised for not showing more sensitivity to the diverse nuances of 'dwelling' and life histories that many, such as women, may experience and to their subjective relationships with place (51-53). Man is seen in humanistic geography, such as that of Relph and Tuan, as being a 'baseline' against which the experiences of all can be measured (53). Here is an example that demonstrates awareness of these dichotomies in place-based language and in geographical studies. This thesis writes positively of community, home and identity as created and sustained by bonds with place, here in the case of Italian cultural traditions; however, it also discusses how suffering and oppression can be integrally intertwined in one's sense of

place. Specific ethnographic interviews outline such traumas here. Rose (1993) argues that masculinist geography such as that of Tuan and Relph denies such specificity, particularly in the sphere of women's experiences. Home, community and place-based identity can serve to perpetuate the oppression of women, a point too frequently overlooked in place studies, Rose argues, citing also from other feminist scholars (Rose, 1993: 51-56).

Another point to clarify is this thesis' use of the term Other in relation to Nature. Feminists have criticised masculinist geography for representing place as Woman, even conflating place with Woman, in a generalised, stereotypical fashion (Rose, 1993: 56). Beyond this mystical, universal symbolism of Woman as place and Other — or sometimes (M)other — there is also the stereotype of the 'symbolic Woman who represents Community' (Rose, 1993:57-59). In section 2.13 below Robert Orsi's studies in Italian Harlem argue that there is indeed powerful identification with home through the figure of the Madonna in Italian-American immigrant communities (Orsi, 2002). However, this thesis' use of 'Other' is to designate those who have been marginalised, disenfranchised and oppressed, which can include both Nature and women. In this sense it agrees with Rose's 'reclaiming' of the Other from what she views as masculinist geography, which holds its own perceptions of the Other to be the only exhaustive, complete knowledge of the world (Rose, 1993: 10-11; 45). Such feminist critiques as those of Merchant, Rose and Plumwood, among others, form a basis to the paradigm and epistemology informing this thesis, even when not overtly and directly elucidated in feminist language.

Finally, this overview of certain critiques and caveats concludes with Foucault and the heterotopia. As mentioned above, in section 2.8, the talk in which Foucault introduced his

theory of heterotopia was published posthumously (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008: 4; Sohn, 44, in Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008). Sohn and others have pointed out that the heterotopia was meant by Foucault to subvert and challenge the ‘norm’, society’s conventions — a typically Foucauldian power dynamic. Yet, according to Sohn and others, in the decades since his death many using the term have missed this point. Here a social justice interpretation enters: as Sohn discusses, the ‘spaces in between’ which seem to challenge homogeneity and elitism in urban development or social construction may be too hastily glossed over as ‘heterotopic’.

What remains from a vast majority of postmodern interpretations of heterotopia, unfortunately, are partial and incomplete classifications of what in reality are vulnerable and marginalized spaces (...) they are also the results of uneven development (Sohn, 2008: 49).

This perspective returns to the caveat raised above on the dangers of romanticising without proper analysis. Some scholars have also perceived insensitivities and oversights in Foucault’s delineated ‘heterotopology’, (section 2.8), such as the potential for suffering in the sites he describes of seventeenth and eighteenth century North and South American colonies, in military barracks, ocean-going ships or in brothels. Indeed, as Hilde Heynen observes, the heterotopia may ‘harbour liberating practices, but one should question whether the liberation applies to everyone who is involved’ (Heynen, 321, in Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008). Heynen points out that ‘heterotopias can be sites for oppression and hegemonic violence’, as well as offering ‘the potentials for resistance and subversion’ (Heynen, 319).

In the following sections we move now to those critical works focused on Italy.

PART THREE: SPECIFIC ITALY STUDIES

2.12 *Campanilismo*, Religious Festivals, and Italian *Senso del Luogo*

This literature review has discussed certain economic and political science theories relevant to the thesis. Now this section reviews specifically those who study festival and public ritual in Italy, beginning with Herman Tak's work in the region of Basilicata.

Basilicata has traditionally been one of the poorest regions of southern Italy. Tak's studies of Italian festivals, power structures, identity and religious customs offer important contributions to the literature locating this thesis. The *Genius loci* of southern Italy is different from the classical understanding of an immanent deity or spirit in a place, which enhances the aura or power of that location. In the traditional Southern Italian framework, one's connection with the countryside may come through a sense of its *Genius loci* being a guardian spirit which protects a community from evil. Tak examines popular or indigenous traditions there (243) regarding ghosts, witches and spells, such as those involved in Evil Eye, and he shows how these required their own rituals (Tak, 2000: 124). Apotropaic structures, protective icons and images, abound in Italy, north and south.

Townsmen saw Nature and country as dangerous and uncivilized, the result being that country chapels and saints were considered a form of ritual protection. (...) In winter the town surrounded by an empty and dangerous countryside, was protected by a belt of chapels of saints-protectors against illness (Tak, 2000: 79).

Chapter six will review Piedmont traditions and beliefs that include precisely what Tak describes in southern Italy: a 'belt' of protective materiality woven through belief and ritual around Paroldo.

Tak examines what ritual means in the anthropological view, and what ethnography of ritual can reveal about a society in change. He offers significant perspectives on the power structures and politics that influence public ritual, a theme intrinsically wound into life in Italy, as well as into my Milan fieldwork. In addition he examines the oppression suffered in southern and rural Italy in past years, and how local tradition or ritual has often answered a need for means of empowerment (Tak, 2000: 209-243). The term *campanilismo* arises frequently in this thesis; Tak translates it as ‘local patriotism’ (Tak, 2000: 27) and also as ‘local chauvinism’ (Tak, 1990: 90). It literally means ‘Bell Tower-ism’ and can be a Italian parochial regionalism which manifests in an attitude of thinking one’s bell tower is more important or beautiful than another’s bell tower. Tak describes in an earlier article: ‘*campanilismo* can be seen as a non-institutionalized and quasi-mystic notion that involves the expression of positive sentiments towards one’s own community’ (Cohen, 1977: 107, cited in Tak, 1990: 90).

In a country that is influenced by and inculcated in neo-Platonic, Catholic attitudes towards Nature, such *campanilismo* — a longing for a piece of architecture — could be seen as one aspect of an Italian sense of place. Like the inhabitants of eighteenth and nineteenth century London, who defined themselves as Cockneys if they were born within the sound of Bow Bells, those within the sound of a certain Italian town’s or city’s bell tower chimes would speak a dialect that set them apart from the neighbouring town. For Milan, whose own versions of big city *campanilismo* and local identity creation are examined in Chapter five, those born within view of the golden Madonna on top of its main cathedral, or *Duomo*, are those who may rightfully call themselves Milanese. Tak writes on Calvello:

...in the first place they were focused on local society. This, among others, was expressed in a local dialect that, according to the Calvellesi, differed considerably from those of the

neighboring towns. Although there were differences in the dialect, it was an expression of campanilismo. This local patriotism was also expressed in negative stereotypes of inhabitants of the neighbouring towns (Tak, 2000: 27).

In Italy each region was in ancient times not merely a distinct region, but actually a city state, where within a small geographic region like today's Tuscany, Siena made war on Florence, and Lucca on Siena, and so forth. This is the extreme example of the animosity expressed among cities, but as Tak illustrates, envy, disdain, humorous stereotyping and prejudicial dealings abounded – even between villages living side by side.

In the Mediterranean, like elsewhere, religious expression can be an outstanding medium for local sentiments. In religious festivities, like the patronal festivals and All Souls' Day, communities not only celebrated the divine, but also their own society (Tak, 1990: 95).

These loyalties often survived diaspora, as Orsi shows in his work on the Madonna of Loreto in New York City (Orsi, 1985; 2002), and Sapelli discusses in his studies of internal migrations in Italy (1995). Often a community looks to preserve a sense of identity through remembered, shared sense of place. Place-based identity is an important theme in my fieldwork, as is shown in Chapters five and six.

Tak's work is one of the few studies in English that examines festival and also ritual structures in Italy from a scholarly or ethnographic point of view. Thus, despite the substantial differences in our scholarly perspectives, Tak is significant in the framework here.

2.12 Performing place and the sacred in food

Food is a highlighted theme in the fieldwork, particularly in Chapter six on Piedmont's festival traditions. Tak examines, though not in depth or symbolically, the ritual foods (*cibi ritual*) involved in certain feast days such as Easter or winter feasts (2000:108; 116).

Stefania Bettinelli's published thesis brings in pertinent associations between food and the sacred, which are themes that emerged in my fieldwork. Bettinelli discusses a popular Italian folk singer, Francesco Guccini, and the powerful influence on his music from the rural countryside of his home (2002). Her work illustrates a literal case of performing place. Bettinelli identifies certain sites that have particularly profound sense of place for Guccini, such as the river where he spent so much of his childhood, and the great old mill on the river, a focal point of the community there. Her work underscores not only the sacrality he found there, but the strong *Genius loci* with which others in the community there identify as well. Bettinelli offers insights into Italian culture by using alchemical symbolism; her descriptions show how the immanent divinity or *Genius loci* permeates and imbues food. She writes of the mill: 'The symbolism in situ of the quasi-alchemical transformation of the wheat kernels or the chestnuts into flour, (is) an operation which is otherwise quite everyday' (Bettinelli, 2002: 107-108). There is religious symbolism in the mill's architectural structure, which she calls altar-like (2002:108), and through its movement as the grain is milled. Milling grain or chestnuts for such staples of the rural diet as polenta, pasta and bread becomes an alchemical act.

All four elements (water, air, earth, fire) combine together with other symbols including those of a religious type to give place to a metamorphosis, where the energy of the water represents birth, the loss of form represents death, flour is resurrection, and bread is communion (2002: 108).

Beyond the obvious Catholic symbolism, alchemy is a familiar theme to Italians, in this land of renaissance and mediaeval magicians. Perceiving a kind of transubstantiation of the foodstuffs via the mill offers a pertinent metaphor for this study, and echoes similar sentiments on the sacredness of communal sharing of local food expressed by my fieldwork participants. As Grimes, Knott and others here theorise, the sacred and the religious can be found in the most 'ordinary' of places and actions.

2.13 Lived Religion, Performing Ritual and Community Healing

Orsi articulates in his work on The Madonna of Mount Carmel honoured in New York City that the values of the home or *domus* inculcated at the family table are in essence a religion for Italians that extends beyond the home (Orsi, 2002:77). Orsi's (2002) ethnography offers a discussion of lived religion in a complex community. He focuses on the enduring Italian-American festival in East Harlem, in New York City during a certain historical period, 1880-1950, and gives an understanding of the evolution of the Italian-American experience in America, and of how American Catholicism adapted and evolved. Whether in Italy or in other parts of the world, food is a key component of religious and cultural festivals. In Italy (and for Italian-Americans as well) there is a cultural fascination with food. Orsi points out that food is often connected to the sacred, particularly as it is intrinsic to the extended sense of home in its most revered cultural form, Orsi's *domus* (2002: xlv). While Orsi does not write much of the foods in themselves, he does discourse in depth on eating together, on cooking, on the value of food and all that the *domus* signifies in Italian and Italian-American culture (2002: 75-149). 'That unit, the *ostal* or *domus*, was at once building and family, the unifying principle that linked man and his possessions' (Ladurie, 1979: 352-353, cited in Orsi, 2002: xlv). Relationship and reciprocity appear again as significant themes: 'Religion is always religion-in-action, religion-in-relationships between people, between the way the world is and the way people imagine or want it to be' (Orsi, 2002: xx). His focus and understanding of food in Italian culture is also an important contribution to the framework here, as food comes to centre stage in Chapter six.

Orsi's examination of the various rituals connected with the Madonna, through the time period mentioned, illustrates the element of 'street theatre' attached to the religiosity of the

Italian-American community there (2002: xliii-xlix). This community comes largely from the south of Italy, known as the *Meridione* or *Mezzogiorno*, and therefore there is some overlap with the work done by Tak. There are intriguing parallels to the Madonna's perceived protection of Siena and the Siennese allegiance to her over centuries. Like many places in Italy, the religious identification of divinity or divine patron or patroness became intertwined with the people's sense of place and local sense of identity. Tak's work makes this clear. Although this thesis does not study the patron saint or Madonna festivals specifically in each town in the fieldwork, only that of Saint Martin in Paroldo, each town has an important identification with their Madonna or patron saint. Orsi articulates how the 'sacred theatre' of the community ritual is played out under the watchful eye of the divine figure ruling the *domus*, and the annual ritual cleanses, purges and re-integrates the people for the year ahead (Orsi, 2002: xlviii- xlix; 172-173; 177).

Like Tak, Orsi discusses *campanilismo* as it relates to the building of the real Church belltower on 115th street in the 1920's — a profoundly symbolic achievement for the immigrant community there. A transformation took place in the community, perhaps due to the sense of pride and new acknowledgement that was engendered, helping to heal Italian insecurities about their place in America.

Italian Harlem, as we have seen, eventually attained a sense of community identification, solidarity and loyalty transcending the *campanilismo* that the immigrants brought with them from Italy. (...) The church and the devotion belonged to the entire community, not to any particular neighborhood or region of Italy (2002: 65).

The festival brought a positive recognition of the Other, in this case the Italian community of Harlem at that time. Like LaChapelle's writings on Siena, and Parsons', to be examined more below, this history in Harlem gives evidence of the empowerment and healing that public ceremony and ritual can convey through identity creation and meaning-making. Orsi's study

shares significant themes with this thesis' work as he demonstrates the blending of sense of place, ritual, relationality and community healing, bonded through the sacredness of home and family.

2.14 Civil Religion as guardian of identity and sense of place

Gerald Parsons' views on the *Palio* in Siena offer another study of politics and power interwoven with lived religion. It is important to discuss what he and other scholars call both 'civic religion' and 'civil religion' in relation to perhaps the most famous public *festa* and ritual in Italy, and Chapter four on festival will return to the *Palio*. The renowned race and festival has been studied, examined and idealised by myriad authors. However, not many have specifically reviewed the sense of place that the *Palio* has maintained over centuries. As mentioned above, Parsons' vast experience of the *Palio* links the astonishing sense of community of the Sieneese, their civic health and deeply ingrained sense of place with what he calls the development of a 'civil religion' through the *Palio*.

The *Palio* of Siena, however, is much more than simply a tourist attraction; it is no less than the principal means by which the distinctive traditions and culture of Siena and the Sieneese have been – and still are – maintained, nurtured and passed down the generations. It is also (...) a festival which links the civic identity and rituals of modern and contemporary Siena to the civic rituals and traditions of medieval, renaissance and early modern Siena (Parsons, 2004: xiv).

The *Palio* is remarkable in many aspects, but also in that there is a well-documented historical consistency in this enormous community ritual. The horse race as we know it today was based on earlier types of festivals and competitions. It may well have been celebrated in nearly unbroken annual regularity — depending on the scholar one believes — for some four hundred years. However, the events that triggered this devotion to the Madonna which Parsons attributes as the basis to the 'civil and civic religion' of Siena go back even farther: to

the thirteenth century, and the famous Battle of Monteperti, Sept. 1260. The citizens' awareness of this event is similar to the Battle of Hastings for a British person, or perhaps the Battle of Gettysburg or the Alamo for an American. The place of this battle is venerated, and in fact, is maintained as a kind of sacred site in the Tuscan countryside. Parsons attributes the Marian devotion that sprang out of this victory by the Sienese as a firm basis for the development of Siena's civil religion leading to the creation of the *Palio*. 'It is no exaggeration to say "the myth of Monteperti" provides the foundation of subsequent Sienese civil religion' (Parsons, 2004: 2).

The depth ecology and relationship with place that their *Palio* gives the Sienese is highlighted in the sacredness that the Sienese attribute to every symbol connected with their elaborately theatrical ritual of the *Palio*. Everything connected with the districts or *contrade* has an integrally sacred meaning, which still may contain a deeply 'earthy' aspect. The discussions from LaChapelle and also illustrate the Sienese feeling about 'earth in the piazza'. Even horse manure is deemed sacred or at least fortuitous in the *contrade*. This underscores the embodied earthiness of this belief: if the horse which is being blessed in one of the *contrade* chapels defecates, that is celebrated as a good sign for the success of his or her running. It is observed in silence, as well — no cheering or other more raucous recognition is permitted. The pile of manure is left there in the chapel and is duly noted as an 'augur' of a good race (Parsons, 2004: 112; Cristina Amberti, 26 October 2007). The attention to manure is a Rabelaisian element; however, the silence and reverence it receives is less so. Nonetheless, it is an eloquent symbol of how the sacred and the mundane in the *Palio* festival are interwoven. Some regarding this with a strictly Catholic eye would say the 'profane' (Parsons, 2004: 113-115).

The *Palio* and its myriad rituals involving the earth, animals and animal symbolism demonstrate materiality and relationality, which weave together Nature, place and the sacred.

2.15 Community, Identity and Festival: cases from Tuscany and northern Spain

This section discusses primarily the work of Crociani-Windland (2007), an Italian native whose PhD studies were carried out in Tuscany. Crociani-Windland studied four festivals in her family's ancestral home area: the renowned *Palio* in Siena; the *Bravio* in Montepulciano, a barrel race with some early similarities to the *Palio*; the *Bruscello*, a popular theatre company in Montepulciano and the *Teatro Povero* in Monticchiello, likewise a popular theatre production. This section will digress from the Italian study to look also briefly at William Christian's work (1989) in northern Spain.

Crociani-Windland's focus is different from this thesis', and her sense of what constitutes rootedness is likewise dissimilar. Notwithstanding this, her work is significant for my literature review in four specific lines of argument and investigation: first it is one of the few academic studies on festival cultures in Italy. It offers an interesting ethnography of performance, festival and ritual through the eyes of the Tuscans interviewed. Her experiences and perspectives give a different view of what performing place means — from the perspective of how land use forms appear and impact what is represented in the productions put on by the townspeople. Second, while taking a different angle, the study investigates forms of sense of place with interesting parallels to my own goals and areas of focus. A third common theoretical focus is community dialogue and health: her background gives the thesis

an inside view of the positive effect festivals can have on a community. Fourth is the relationship to land, home and food. Many of Italy's rural regions have only recently evolved out of sharecropping, as Crociani-Windland relates (2007: 230), and as my own research learned. This and other agricultural economic histories are discussed at length in her Chapter nine, 'Sharecropping and Modernity' (2007: 229-247). Therefore, as in some of my areas of fieldwork, many of her participants were people with strong ties to their lands from generations of farming. Piedmont and Lombardy's land use history and land reform history differ from Tuscany's; yet there are parallel issues and challenges affecting rural Southern European regions, as Sapelli's studies have articulated (1995).

William Christian has raised relevant points in his work regarding Spain. His investigations of religious traditions over a number of decades in remote mountain valleys of northern Spain bring up related theories. In regards to the advent of industrialisation in the twentieth century, and the extremely disruptive 'flight from the land' (230) that Crociani-Windland discusses in Tuscany, Christian writes of the rural Spanish village suffering depopulation as industrialisation arrived in Spain: 'its magic leaks out year by year' (Christian, 1989: 40). Ingold similarly has theorised in his work on the 'dwelling perspective' how a relational model may aid humanity to nurture and maintain vitality in a place, ensuring that it never 'dries up' (Ingold, 2000: 149). Reciprocity and relational epistemologies relate to both human and Nature communities, which are interconnected, 'interanimated' in Basso's term (Basso, 1996: 55). As do Christian and Crociani-Windland, this thesis also theorises how a rural area may keep both its population and its energies intact through the honouring and maintenance of traditions. The village or town's festivals and rituals are a stage — whether actual theatrical productions like the *Bruscello* or not — and on it local history, local stories and traditions, (even personal or familial rivalries), are revealed. When industrialisation

arrived in Italy and Spain, as evidenced in the work of both these scholars, social fabric began to unravel. Christian depicts it: 'With the city as the focus for attention, the village is without hope and its ceremonies empty. Its own peculiar theater has lost its audience' (1989: 41). Sapelli perhaps would argue that the social fabric did not exactly unravel but was removed and transported elsewhere in the widespread internal migrations in southern Europe's late industrialisation (Sapelli, 1995: 31-46). Sadly, for the rural areas the net effect was the same — the village theatre became dark and empty. Later chapters here will return to the Turnerian sense of the village as theatre and the festival or *sagra* as community theatre — theatre with healing, solidifying ability, which can be lost as diaspora and emigration occur. Local initiatives, such as those in my fieldwork in Piedmont and Lombardy, are actively fighting to renew these bonds and this community health with the stories of place, with music, crafts and traditions.

Crociani-Windland makes clear the earthy sense of embodiment that earlier societies felt. Bakhtinian carnivalesque and grotesque realism (1984) eloquently expressed the penchant for this form in earlier society. The *Bravio* shows, as did to some extent the *Palio* in Siena, how strong the symbolic ties are between economic strength, power and in the case of agricultural societies, to fertility. Here she describes the phallic symbolism of the *ceri*, large candles that play a significant role in the *Bravio*:

In Siena the *ceri* are carried in a special litter, requiring at least two or even four bearers, most commonly children or young people. The link between economic and sexual potency is thus related to the social sphere and to the young members of the community, who may represent the vitality of the group, both as proof of local male potency, but also as evidence of the community's ability to renew itself and go into the future (Crociani-Windland, 2007:201).

There are four in-depth studies in her thesis; simply using one of the four can give some examples of how sense of place is exhibited in this Tuscan work. The theatre productions

making up the *Bruscello* are not well-known outside of Italy, although they are in Italy; today the *Bruscello* has ties to television and to the most mainstream theatres such as the Scala opera house of Milan (Crociani-Windland, 2007: 152). Despite the involvement mentioned above of high-profile mainstream forces today, Crociani-Windland stresses that the actors are local people. The point of the locals' involvement is certainly the case in all of the festivals studied here. She also describes the importance of costuming, which is not only important in ritual generally, but is a vital part of life, festival and ritual in Italy. My fieldwork in both Lombardy and Piedmont highlights particular elements of costuming and how these can create a sense of identity, of belonging and of honouring. In the *Bruscello* themes typically are drawn from regional myths, legends and lore — including topics that carry on what Crociani-Windland calls ‘foundation myths’. Although scholars have not identified the origins of the town as Etruscan with total certainty, given the Etruscan history of the region it is not difficult to see a possibly connected origin. However, as in my fieldwork, the fundamental point for Crociani-Windland is the sense of pride and shared heritage that the legends instill in local people.

There is a magnificent building near *Porta al Prato* where Etruscan stone tablets and medieval carved coats of arms line the bottom half of the walls. Parents point them out to their children as they pass, with a feeling of pride and belonging. It is their heritage, it belongs to the people. The people have found ways of making their, more or less, factual origins more memorable by telling the story many times in *Bruscello* form (Crociani-Windland, 2007: 164).

In my Chapters five and six the fieldwork manifests locals' belief in the region's Celtic origins; like Montepulciano's ‘foundation myths’ pointing at possible Etruscan heritage, in northern Italy people draw special pride from their perceptions of Celticity.

In her study of the *Bruscello*, Crociani-Windland discusses how in the past actors in the yearly spectacle were in fact peasants whose sharecropping livelihood profoundly coloured

their perceptions of place. She describes that people believed that to perform the *Bruscello* properly one must: ‘ “have it in one's blood, (...) feel it like one feels the air of home, as something that can't be found anywhere else” ‘ (Crociani-Windland, 2007: 159-160). Such embodied exteriorisations of place are engrained, instinctual mammalian senses or responses. For Crociani-Windland this mammalian behaviour is an example of theories from French scholars Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's work, thinkers who have fundamentally inspired and affected her views. Crociani-Windland develops her own theories on the link between human ritual and the manner in which animals ritualise their bonds with territory. ‘Deleuze and Guattari speak of how ethologists have demonstrated the link between animal rituals and territory, and grouped the associated phenomena under the concept of ritualisation’ (Crociani-Windland, 2007: 174). She concludes that these ritualisations of territorial bonds and community expressions of place, in Italy or elsewhere, ‘signal(s) the importance of the inter-relatedness of land, body, language and identity’ (174). *Campanilismo* meets ethology – Italian regional chauvinism may be more deeply rooted than previously believed.

PART FOUR: CHAPTER SEVEN'S ANALYSIS

2.16 Analysis by scale – four cases as precedent

The following four studies offer multi-disciplinary precedents for the method of analysis chosen for the five Italian festivals investigated in this thesis, which uses a ‘Scale of Engagement’. This topic is addressed again in Chapter three on my chosen methodologies. Here is a brief overview to detail key aspects of the theorists from which this study draws in Chapter seven's analyses, listed alphabetically:

a) Blount et al

In the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* (2008: 1021-1045) Blount et al reviewed selected measures of coping and of stress in children, using twelve measures of coping and three measures of stress. Their method of creating tables of data categories is akin to the format devised for the data on fieldwork here. Their twelve measures were drawn both from self-reported questionnaires, as well as from observed measures of pain-coping. The purpose of the scaled assessments was to design better means of treatment in clinical settings. This milieu is obviously very different from the scope and purpose of this thesis' study. However, the meaning of 'engagement' is wide-ranging, and how people *engage* with pain, stress and coping enters into the nuanced definition. Therefore, in researching current theorists writing on scales of engagement, this study stood out. It is appropriate to this work in the sense that the field of psychiatry delves into emotions such as emotional well-being, one's ability to bond or inability, sense awareness and sensory stimulation — all states that enter into this study of sense of place.

b) Ellison and Burrows

This study discusses various conceptions of engagement and disengagement by looking at cultural change, social exclusivity, space and housing in urban contexts. Their research, described in the *Journal of Housing Studies* (2007), breaks the data down into a table of four columns showing scales of engagement and disengagement in spatial contexts. (Or as Ellison and Burrows write the word, '(dis)engagement'.) Their index had the greatest influence on the indexed scales created here to measure sense of place in festival. The elements introduced by Ellison and Burrows that parallel some of my festival analysis are in particular the community engagement, or lack of engagement/disengagement, with the actual physical surroundings as well as with the human community. Ellison and Burrows have drawn

inspiration in large part from Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus', 'an inherently spatial concept' (Ellison and Burrows, 2007: 310). In Bourdieu's words:

Habitus is thus a sense of one's (and others') place and role in the world of one's lived environment. (...) habitus is an embodied, as well as a cognitive, sense of place (Bourdieu, 2002: 5).

This description by Bourdieu of his notion of embodied sense of place is pertinent to the factors that this study considers, in particular all those 'senseful,' 'placeful' (Casey, 1996: 19) and sensuous experiences of place, like food.

Ellison and Burrows' study measures excitement and fear across a continuum of individuals and communities of differing socio-economic strata, reviewing how they not only structure their homes, but how they *feel* in their housing spaces or neighbourhoods. One of their tables defines zones in terms of 'wild' and 'tame', and also uses language from sociology regarding 'identity spaces' (2007: 296-297). In the sense of their analysing communities' relationships with space and with each other, this method of scaled analysis is pertinent to this study's work on festivals as a bridge to place and offers an appropriate precedent to my scales.

c) Tilley et al

The third choice among theorists utilising relevant scaled measurements is Tilley et al in the *Journal of Material Culture* (2000:197-224). This study is significant in my theoretical framework for its analytical structure, as well as for its theories of place agency and engagement with place.

This is an archaeological study of boulder and stone masses, known as ‘clitter’, in the southwest of England, on Bodmin Moor. The archaeologists over time began to recognise human-made patterns and modifications in the arrangements of the stones that at first had been overlooked. The study discusses the ultimate interpretations of the cultural significance of the stones’ positioning for ancient people, and thus is pertinent to this thesis through the philosophical thrust of the researchers’ conclusions. In essence the archaeologists began to create a picture of the Bronze Age residents and architects’ sense of place.

The circle must have been a cosmological template for the ordering of the world and situating humanity within it. The prehistoric architecture and its relationship to the landscape is circles within circles within circles. And those circles encompassed relationships between the living and the ancestral dead, the people on Leskernick Hill and those living elsewhere on Bodmin Moor. (...) These people lived in a world of stone and massively modified the stones on their hill and gave these stones meaning and significance. There is clearly a continuum of relationships between people and the stones... (Tilley et al, 2000:217).

Tilley et al are sensitive to (and try to resist) culture/Nature dichotomies (219). They are interested in depicting a flow of relationship, of reciprocity between people and place, as my studies reveal in the festival areas studied. In this sense their perspective is relevant to this thesis. Likewise, Tilley et al use language that echoes various theorists fundamental to this thesis and describes how the team believes ancient populations ‘engaged with the stones’. The findings demonstrate ancient and modern societies’ meaning-making with ritual and relationship with place.

A sense of locality was being imagined, produced and maintained through moving stones and moving past stones on the hill and through ritual acts in and around them. Through engaging with the stones people ‘made’ themselves, physically and emotionally creating an attachment to place (Tilley et al, 2000: 218).

Tilley et al’s scales of engagement are metaphorical and textual, in contrast with the two other studies outlined above. The use of ‘scale’ is from the perspective of visual scope, positioning, patterning, and so forth. Instead of laying out findings in tables and indexes, their study

delineates the work with four case studies that discuss the differing scale of circles, cairns, walling and arenas.

These are not the only archaeologists whose work has had resonance with this thesis, as section 2.8.1 reviewed. Heyd's theories on place agency, heterotopia and landscape art (1999), discussed there, have been influential. Whether using the language of heterotopias, polychronic spaces or scaled engagement, these theories give evidence to the nuanced awareness of place agency that permeates my festival fieldwork.

d) Williams et al

This study returns to the disciplines of healthcare, but from a different perspective than those illustrated by case study 'a' listed above. Here psychologists, medical doctors and geographers join to examine how to fill the gap in the existing literature on the relationship between health and 'the place-based construct *sense of place*' (Williams et al, 2008: 73). Their aim is also to 'develop and validate a measurement instrument' reliably analysing the effects of this influence (ibid: 74). The study was developed using an extensive literature review and the gathering of focus group data, as was my own on Italian festival. The outcome was their development of a psychometric scale examining seven elements of sense of place: 'rootedness, belonging, place identity, meaningfulness, place satisfaction, emotional attachment, physical environment relations' (Williams et al, 2008: 79). Through the approach drawn from 'facet design' (ibid: 77) the group analysed sense of place, its elements and sub-elements. This study poses interesting parallels and similarities to my study of festival as an expression of sense of place and its varied elements.

2.17 Conclusion

This literature review has highlighted the primary theorists and theories that have had significant influence on the thesis' development. It should be evident, however, that other important theorists' work will emerge in later chapters, specific to certain elements or aspects of the fieldwork case studies. It should also be evident that every 'giant on whose shoulders my work stands' cannot be discussed in a document of this length. (Many of those are listed in the final bibliography.) This chapter reveals the underlying theoretical framework on which the fieldwork can now rest. The discussion has revealed the critical niche for my work, formed from an unusual convergence of diverse theorists. This intersection demonstrates that heterotopic, polychronic time can emerge in festival, which allows it to become a space for new relationality — for the human as well as the more-than-human. In this space, new awareness of the agential power of place arises.

In Chapters five and six the fieldwork demonstrates the powerful relational epistemology reflected in Italy's poetics of dwelling, and its nuanced social structures and performances that demonstrate profound bonds with place. The next chapter discusses the methodology that has facilitated the fieldwork and its interpretations.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Our goal should be to transform ethnography into a praxis capable of making the Other present (Rodman, 2003:212).

3.0 An interdisciplinary research style and methodology

The relationships that people in Northern Italy have with their place, with their homes and homelands are expressed through community festivals, communal rituals and other traditional local celebrations. My research examines these festivals and how the polychronic space of the festival allows for an unusual embodiment of place which is ritualised; in some cases the festival/rituals give evidence of place having more agential influence than might have been understood initially. Local identity is often validated or even created through those events.

In Ingold and Milton's terms, this thesis' methodology springs from theories recognising the value of a 'poetics of dwelling' (Ingold, 2000: 103; 110), and of a 'relational epistemology' (Milton, 2002: 47). As Chapter two has delineated, theorists from diverse areas such as eco-psychology, ritual studies, performance studies, archaeology and anthropology as well as religious studies have had an influence on this work. Many of the festivals studied in this thesis' fieldwork have an element of performance or of street theatre, depending on one's view. Thus this thesis offers an intersection among various fields, through an interdisciplinary perspective, which weaves themes, topics, influences and methodologies.

This chapter discusses the forms of research methods and qualitative methodologies employed in this thesis, and gives both sources and reasons for the choices. It reveals how the chosen methodology developed, as well as the writers whose epistemologies and theories

have influenced the choice of methodological philosophy. It also discusses the technology used, the style of interviewing, how participants in fieldwork interviews were chosen, how geographic areas and the events at which some of the interviews were based all were chosen.

3.1 The philosophy of methodology

The language of social science and humanities research methodology has evolved rapidly in the last twenty-thirty years, as have the topics deemed acceptable or worthy of scholarly interest. One principal reason behind this evolution is the development of qualitative research methods that honour the personal and transpersonal, the creative and intuitive (Braud and Anderson, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). The new paradigm of thought that has evolved in the academy (Harris, 2008; Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 18-19, 83-84; in Braud and Anderson, 1998: 5-6) is demonstrated in the methodologies and epistemology discussed in this chapter. Today's fields of qualitative research are increasingly accepted in the most mainstream of disciplines (Somekh, 2005: 1-4). Often the branches of such research are divided into two: hermeneutics and heuristics. However, within each of them there can be related, intertwining areas of research. Here the two are loosely defined for a start, and then the discussion will return to the terms later in the chapter.

Hermeneutics is an ancient school of theory, spanning the centuries from the ancient Greek groves of learning into the era of European mediaeval Christian theologians, and it continues today as a popular area of postmodern thought, philosophy and methodology. In essence, hermeneutics teaches how best to analyse a text, manuscript or a dialogue, 'so that the intention and meaning behind appearances are fully understood' (Moustakas, 1990: 9). It has — to use a somewhat reductionist perspective — a more intellectual and analytical approach

than heuristics. 'Hermeneutical analysis is required in order to derive correct understanding of a text' (Moustakas, 1990: 9). The exact language, the social conditions, history and other external factors influencing a text's creation are fundamental in a hermeneutical interpretation. As this chapter discusses later, hermeneutics also draws from the Socratic method of interpreting dialogue and of directing conversation (as a means to the truth) (Silverman, 1991), and thus is for many scholars a key methodology in interviewing.

Clark Moustakas is often attributed with the creation of the name for the heuristic school of methodology within qualitative research's means of inquiry. Heuristics has its origins in the same root as the word 'eureka', which means discovery in Greek: 'Heuristic processes incorporate creative self-processes and self-discoveries' (Moustakas, 1994: 17). Moustakas describes six phases of heuristic research, quoting from himself in an earlier work. 'They include: the initial engagement, immersion into the topic and question, incubation, illumination, explication and culmination of the research in a creative synthesis' (Moustakas, 1990: 27; Moustakas, 1994: 18). It is a significant development that intuitive, reflexive modes of inquiry once connected with therapeutic modalities can now be integrated into many academic areas, in the social sciences and other fields as well (Thompson, 2006: 18; Wright, 1995: 3-5). This indeed demonstrates new paradigms of thought reaching into the social sciences. The branch of psychology known as 'transpersonal' views the full range of human experiences as valid and valuable (Braud and Anderson, 1998; Wright, 1995), including those often said to be ineffable — thereby requiring a special sensitivity and 'mindfulness', a word from Buddhist practice.

Commonly regarded as the fourth expression of 20th century psychology, transpersonal psychology seeks to delve deeply into the most profound and inexplicable aspects of human experiences, including mystical and unitive experiences, experiences of transformation,

extraordinary insight, meditative awareness, altered states of consciousness and self-actualization (Anderson, 1998: 69).

These transformative, personal experiences and observations play a part in qualitative research through heuristic modes of inquiry. The research categorised as heuristic phenomenology fits well with my personal epistemology and ontology, and offers a system of language appropriate to the research here. The method termed 'intuitive inquiry' by Rosemarie Anderson builds on heuristic methods, as laid out by Moustakas (1990). It is a compatible mode of inquiry, as the section below will explain.

Hermeneutical means have aided in the final analyses of my fieldwork. This is almost unavoidable, as a) I was working in a foreign language, and therefore have had to pay special linguistic attention to the nuances and multiple meanings of words in interviews, sometimes including in the regional dialect; also b) my study has required historical research and awareness regarding the historical and cultural details of the regions, festivals and towns observed (Gadamer, 1976 cited in Moustakas, 1994: 9-11). Therefore, as many theses require, a number of interwoven methodologies are employed here. Here again are the weaving allusions inspired by Ingold (2000: 339-348) and others. A term in vogue in the social sciences is to 'triangulate', to describe the overlapping of a variety of methodologies in order to check one's process and results (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008:7-8). Harris defines it as 'using complementary approaches to data gathering' (Harris, 2008: 9). Mantin likewise writes of developing a methodology with a 'spiraling process of interpretation emerging from an ongoing conversation between the themes identified' (Mantin, 2004: 159), which she felt was needed in her study of the Goddess movement. That allusion is appropriate here as well. The idea of hermeneutics and heuristics working together applies well here in that it expresses the sense of the two sides of the brain working together — which is a creative manner of

holistic brain function, enhancing one's life, one's relationships, one's work. In education and cognitive studies this is often termed 'cross-functioning', in reference to the ability in certain people and certain activities to use both hemispheres of the brain together (Anderson, 1998: 89-90; Crowley, 1996: 74). Language and symbolism; art and mathematics; music and science; left and right brain functioning jointly offer a holistic means of working, speaking, relating to others, of perceiving the world.

One of the repeated themes of this thesis is 'hearing the voice of place', of the Other (human or more-than-human), which I argue can become more audible through the out of the ordinary time and space of the heterotopia (Foucault, 1967, 1998, 2000: 178-185) created by a festival. (The theory of heterotopia was discussed in Chapter two, section 2.8 and 2.8.1.) To be able to listen intuitively and holistically one must use all of one's abilities, which is an appropriate approach to this examination of relationships between humanity and place. Like the mountaineer spending time in the wild, or the naturalist observing Nature, going out into the 'field' to carry out an ethnographic study is simultaneously becoming aware of one's own perceptions, biases and cultural assumptions, if one keeps a self-reflexive, intuitive stance, as well as being aware of the world around.

3.2 Heuristic and hermeneutical methodologies in qualitative phenomenological research

Melissa Gilbert outlines the meanings of certain distinct terms often used interchangeably.

A research method is a technique for gathering evidence, a methodology is a theory or analysis of how research should proceed, and an epistemology is a theory of knowledge (Gilbert, 1994: 91).

Ruth Mantin, in her work in the Western feminist Goddess movement, plays with metaphors regarding the original Greek meaning of 'method' (Mantin, 2004: 158). She quotes from Steinar Kvale who points out that when a researcher chooses to follow a 'method' it makes her or him akin to a traveller on a journey:

As a traveller, the interviewer sets out upon a journey that leads to a tale to be told upon returning home. The interviewer/traveller "wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people encountered". Kvale draws attention to the fact that should the traveller choose to follow a method, it would be in the original Greek meaning of "a route that leads to a goal" (Mantin, 2004:158).

Continuing this metaphor from Kvale, Mantin relates that when this traveller/researcher talks with inhabitants in a landscape along her/his journey, 'then the traveller is conversing with them in the original Latin meaning of conversation as "wandering together with"' (2004: 158). This is a symbolic portrayal of the 'postmodern constructive understanding of knowledge that involves a conversational approach to social research' (2004:158). Mantin is a feminist researcher in a woman-based project on Goddess spirituality, therefore there are various areas of her work that do not apply to my study in Italy. However, the methodology used in my study follows that epistemology, of postmodernism, (or perhaps postpostmodernism, or late postmodern, in some scholars' preferred terms for this era and area of thought), of constructionism (Stainton-Rogers, 2006: 80-81) and of a conversational, informal approach to interviewing. (Lincoln and Guba call this ontology a 'constructivist paradigm' (Lincoln and Guba, 1989: 79-116).) This approach of 'wandering together' in a conversational style seemed to help my participants relax, and I found it both effective and comfortable myself.

Apart from the simple reason that Italians love conversation, in a more profound academic sense the Socratic method of questioning a topic together in order to explore it is a familiar

pedagogical choice for Italian people. Italy's culture and educational system are based on Greco-Roman culture to a large extent. This method, according to many postmodern philosophers, and in particular Hans-Georg Gadamer as well as those influenced by him, lies at the heart of twentieth century hermeneutics. Discussing his own school of philosophy, in '*Gadamer on Gadamer*' (1991), he concludes by saying:

Never the less, I would admit that the real involvement in a Socratic dialogue, composed for us by Plato, moves us closer to the subject-matter than any conceptual fixation ever could. Today I see the unique contemporaneity (*Aktualitat*) of the Platonic dialogues precisely in the fact that they transcend all ages almost in the same way as great masterpieces of art (Gadamer, 1991: 19).

Here Gadamer succinctly shows us the possibility for a marriage of various forms of enquiry, left and right brained, artistic and analytical, circular and linear. His closing in the essay is pertinent to this study and fieldwork, which look at the empirical and phenomenological, combining the physical and metaphysical.

As practical metaphysics, both of our tasks will remain: to follow the path of knowledge and to think beyond what science has to say. (...) If language has its authentic life in conversation, then the Platonic dialogue will awaken a living discussion now as before, and will achieve the fertile fusion of all horizons in which questioning and searching, we must find our way in our own world (Gadamer, 1991:19).

3.3 A theoretical framework and definition

With this goal in mind, the following offers an outline drawing inspiration from Gilbert's three-pronged breakdown:

1) The research method was constructed first from a comprehensive literature review; then was advanced through pilot studies and finally carried out in fieldwork utilising a carefully designed, culturally sensitive and ethical interview process.

2) The qualitative methodology framework combined both heuristic and hermeneutical philosophies, given the topic and linguistic needs. Heuristic intuitive inquiry allows for a full range of emotions, dreams, intuitions and bodily awareness to influence the 'knowing'. The

research is phenomenological in that it focuses on relationships with Nature and with community. It strives to understand the meanings that people give to Nature and to their sense of belonging in a place, to the feeling of connectedness in a certain place. The occasion or primary vehicle for expression of this sense of place is the community festival, and the expression may manifest in sense-related, embodied forms. However, some of the language and discussions with participants regarding people's relationships with place and with community also had a spiritual or metaphysical quality. Such discussions were somewhat out of the ordinary for the participants, to express unusual and in some aspects intimate feelings, memories, and sensations regarding place with a new acquaintance, who was in addition a foreigner. Thus the fieldwork had aspects of organic inquiry due to its potentially transformative and even spiritual quality (Clements et al, 1998:123-127). The next stages involved hermeneutical study of place, history and tradition of the locations chosen for the fieldwork; this was fundamental as was linguistic knowledge and sensitivity. Remembering that the questions hold perhaps the ultimate key to the truth (Smith 1991: 37), the structure of the interviews utilised a mix of both heuristic and hermeneutic awareness and methods.

3) The epistemology within which this work unfolded is postmodern or late postmodern, feminist (while being universal), ecological and constructionist. My criteria drew from a paradigm that is predicated upon caring for all the co-participants; upon sensitivity to class, economic standing, gender and age; upon other criteria intrinsic to feminist and also ethnic studies such as dialogue (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 31-33). It springs from a paradigm and ethos of awareness and mindfulness towards the human and the more-than-human. Such paradigms and philosophies allow for forms of narrative that were not used in methodology pre-1980, such as narrative, journaling, traditional stories or folk tales. My study has entered into areas of popular religion and folk beliefs, as well as exploring a cross-discipline 'animic'

agency of place (Ingold, 2000:114). Thus an apt definition for the epistemology informing this methodology is intuitive organic constructionist.

3.3.1 Power, privilege and cross-cultural understanding

Like many feminist researchers, Mantin is aware of the political, ethical and power-oriented considerations that a researcher must keep in mind at all times. Jenny Blain wrote that 'Ethnography is political' (Blain, 2004: 234), which is reminiscent and related to the historical feminist view that the 'personal is political' (Anderson, 1998: 77). In my work there has been a need to remain aware of possible discrepancies or misinterpretations, not the least of which is nationality. There is always a possibility of misunderstanding due to the cross-cultural nature of this study, and therefore awareness as well as mindfulness and humility are required regarding my own perceptions (Ezzy, 2004: 114). Underscored here is the need for what is known in scholarship as reflexivity in research (Wallis, 2004:192; 195-197; Hutton, 2004: 171-186). I return to the theme of reflexivity below in section 3.3.2.

Another area that Mantin and others such as Gilbert examine is that of socio-economic difference and privilege. The questions of power-differentials and socio-economic issues of privilege came up often in my fieldwork. Keeping in mind that some of the fieldwork took place in rural areas with rural people, like Gilbert I found it wise at times to try to disguise my social standing, in an attempt not to make participants uncomfortable, nor to draw too much attention to myself. (This sometimes was next to impossible in the tiny hamlets of Andrista and Paroldo.) However, to use her phrase I tried to 'negate my privilege' (Gilbert, 1994: 91). For example, this refers to dress, whether to use my car to get to an interview, if or when to reveal my address, and so forth. Beyond good methodology and ethnographic sensitivity, this

also falls into the realm of courtesy — an area of personal ‘codes of behaviour’. This is elaborated further in sections 3.4.1 and 3.5.2 below. Blain too saw a need to ‘devise my own ethics of research/participation’ in her work with sacred sites and Paganism (Blain, 2004: 233), illustrating how sometimes each individual researcher may need to sensitively adapt conventional codes of ethics and behaviour for the individual qualities of each study. The codes of behaviour I created were perhaps not terribly remarkable. What was remarkable was the sociological spectrum my fieldwork participants spanned, from urbane and sophisticated Milanese (Milan’s Celtic New Year, and its Milan government organisers) to subsistence farmers, the children of them, and former factory workers, in the remote rural areas of Andrista and Paroldo.

Gilbert was admirably concerned with how not to exploit her participants nor betray their trust (1994: 93). This is an important theme and a methodological focus largely attributed to feminist methods of research (Burck, 2005; Gilbert, 1994; Mantin, 2004; *inter alia*). In a conclusion that offers a potential method for inter-cultural and bilingual issues, Gilbert proposes that ‘one possible strategy for overcoming the problems with a particular method may be to use multiple methods’ (1994: 95). Gilbert’s theory is helpful in examining how an interview is structured, particularly in the case of being sure to understand the language when one is not working in one’s native tongue. Asking a question a variety of different ways, and circling back to a concept or question in the interview was a useful technique. Here humility can enter in as well: at times there was need to ask for clarification, especially if the conversation included words in the regional dialect. Charlotte Burck lays out a foundation for her methodologies, focusing on grounded theory, discourse analysis and narrative analysis. She discusses three different techniques, and in particular the types of research questions known as ‘open-ended’. Burck emphasises that this method is ‘exploratory and aiming to

generate hypotheses rather than test them' (Burck, 2005: 238). Such a heuristic style is useful when working in a foreign language (or with non-native speakers, as Burck did), for clarity of intention as well as for cultural sensitivity, especially when coupled with careful observation of body language and gestures. As mentioned earlier, this attention to linguistic variations can also enter into hermeneutic methodologies, drawing from Gadamer's interpretations of Plato and Socrates (Smith, 1991: 36-37).

In my fieldwork the participants came from very different socio-economic levels. Among them were people who described themselves as 'peasants', or as coming from peasant family backgrounds. Some of them had grown up as subsistence farmers, and in one case in Lombardy, the family is still farming in spare and difficult circumstances. I mention these points in light of the need for sensitivity in one's chosen methodologies. As this chapter reveals, this thesis' methodology, techniques and philosophies are drawn from feminist and other heuristic methods, where consequently an awareness of power differentials and socio-economic status in a European setting is of the utmost importance. This is true today in Italy, still, as it would be in a developing world culture. Such awareness and sensitivity is not only appropriate behaviour and courtesy, but also is helpful for entering into the mindset of one's participants, with a potentially nebulous and relative concept like sense of place.

Chapter two discussed Foucault's influence on this thesis in terms of theories of temporality. In addition, Foucault's writings on power structures are significant in my thinking and my choices of methodology. Denzin has created a theory of methodology that he entitles 'Interpretive interactionist' (Denzin, 2009: 397-421, in Jacobsen, 2009). This theory is pertinent to mention here as it strives to maintain a high level of sensitivity to power

differentials and nuances. Denzin has integrated Foucault into his theories, blending the heuristic and the hermeneutic, demonstrating how the researcher must be alert to power and history continually in one's work.

History interacts with power and emotionality. Power permeates every structure of society, including gender relations. For Michel Foucault (2000: 343), power exists as a process, in the dominance relations between men and women, between groups and institutions and so on. (...) Micro-power relations influence every aspect of research (Denzin, 2009: 405).

As Denzin points out, from the moment the researcher begins a study or enters the field situation, 'systems of meaning' permeate the work, as do systems of power and what he terms 'emotionality'. 'Systems of meaning are always embedded in systems of domination and power' (405). In Italy with its delicate nuances of socio-economic structure, politics, gender relations and positivism versus late postmodern constructionism, these considerations were very significant for my fieldwork and research. Whether studying the Apache as in Basso's work (1996), the Inuit as in Ingold (2000), or any other of the studies on place presented here, one must maintain heuristic reflexivity and awareness coupled with hermeneutic understanding of history and context.

3.3.2 Self-reflexive, transpersonal and relational forms of inquiry

This thesis examines often-overlooked aspects of relationships among Nature, place and humanity. It touches on issues deemed sacred in Italian culture, or certainly fundamental and precious: home in all its senses, food, relationships with community and ritual. However, the relationship with Nature is not always seen as sacred in the society. On the contrary, with reference to the breakdown by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as used in Braun and Anderson (1998: 6) showing two contrasting paradigms of the positivist and the naturalist, it appeared from my research and fieldwork that Italy's mainstream was operating from a positivist and rationalist epistemology in regards to Nature. Certain readings and certain interviews seemed

to validate this perception. Consequently it was interesting to witness that the interview process and the discussions of love of place and sense of place sometimes seemed to free the participants from a positivist societal paradigm to permit them to speak lovingly of Nature and of place — perhaps in a language their own culture or experience has not always allowed them. ‘When spoken clearly in words, heretofore unclaimed aspects of our experiences suddenly seem more solid and real. Claiming our memories and experiences gives our spoken words their emancipating qualities’ (Anderson, 1998: 81). The ‘emancipating quality’ became clear as people allowed themselves to speak of beloved places, of favourite sites or even revered trees. Hearing the stories of one’s participants and ‘co-researchers’ is a fundamental premise and practice of the methodology of organic inquiry (Clements et al, 1998: 125-126). Keeping this awareness I noticed how when I spoke about relationships with or perceptions of place or Nature with a postmodern, naturalist language, people reacted in various ways. In some cases, they responded in similar fashion; in other cases it triggered them to give a harsh response. This is heuristic inquiry: observing carefully how co-participants respond, how they speak about the life they perceive around them, about traditions, or the foods they are consuming, and so forth. Heuristic inquiry has been influenced by transpersonal psychology of the late twentieth century (Anderson, 1998: 69-70) whose theories explore how the sharing of personal information can give people a relaxed sense of an intimate exchange-basis. However, one must remain aware — observant and self-reflexive — that the relaxed nature of the exchange will not necessarily elicit anticipated responses.

Sapelli’s works (1995, 2008) were examined in the previous chapter which discussed his theories that Italy’s urban centres ‘inherited’ the rural customs of centuries when migrants moved into the cities by the millions, a process Sapelli terms ‘ruralisation of the city’ (1995:

43-45). One of these culturally ingrained customs is that of reciprocity in relationships, and the tenacity of extended relationships, such as in extended family networks. Awareness of this belief pattern and habit permeated my study and dealings with people; relationality had already been a fundamental part of my own ethos and epistemology, but this cultural relationality in Italy enhanced and underscored it. Sylvie Shaw writes eloquently describing her ecologically-inspired methodology while researching the eco-erotic (Shaw, 2004).

My research approach then is one of relationship. Embracing interconnection and creating a dialogue between self and other (where other can be other people, other species or the natural world) transcends the dualisms inherent in Western thought that split mind from body, matter from spirit, people from nature, visible from invisible, and ideas from experience (2004: 134).

The concepts of relationship and relationality establish a fundamental theme, epistemology and method in this thesis. Relationship and reciprocity are indeed essential elements of life in Italy, and they are also essential elements of mindful researching. Creating rapport can take the conversation quickly to a deeper level of communication, away from the merely superficial or the intellectual. The purpose here is to create and encourage dialogue that roots an experience more in the body, in the 'authentic' and in life (Canty, 2007: 73-85; Moustakas, 1994: 19-22; Shaw, 2004: 137-143). The purpose is, as the next chapters show, to hear the stories held and nurtured by the community — the human and the more-than-human. Shaw argues and gives compelling evidence in her ethnographic research that 'relationality' can be extended to the more-than-human. Bradbury and Lichtenstein observe in their discussions of a relationality methodology in research and in organisational theory that: 'Like Bakhtin (1981) Buber saw dialogue as a dialectal movement between and among human and nonhuman phenomena' (Bradbury and Lichtenstein, 2000: 551-552). The relationality orientation 'transcends the distinction between subject and object... (and)... links researchers and participants in a learning journey' (Bradbury and Lichtenstein, 2000:551-562). Despite the fact that Bradbury and Lichtenstein were not discussing relationships with place or with Nature, but rather among human beings in organisational theory, their theory shares the ethos

of organic inquiry, which ‘leads to the investigation of how life is lived’ (Clements et al, 1998: 123). They also encourage researchers to keep a journal, to maintain reflexivity during the research journey, and to be aware that the experience may ‘profoundly change’ the researcher during the process (Bradbury and Lichtenstein, 2000, 560-562).

In looking at terms for these methodologies the term ‘indwelling’ is compelling, since it likewise weaves two areas of my research together — critical theory and methodology. Indwelling is discussed by Anderson as a term ‘borrowed from heuristic research and (which) is artfully described by Moustakas’ (Anderson, 1998: 83). It allows the researcher to be truly self-reflexive and authentic, as well as sensitive to synchronicities, as described above.

Everything becomes raw material for scrutiny: relationships, dreams, bumper stickers, newspaper articles, chance encounters, casual conversations, and synchronistic events such as a drop-in visit from a least favorite relative (Anderson, 1998: 84).

It is appropriate to mention that a technique used in heuristic methodology is that of keeping a journal on one's research (Braud, 1998: 63). ‘Journaling’, as the practice of writing regularly in a personal journal is called in the vernacular, plays an important part in transpersonal research methods such as those discussed by Braud and Anderson. (Bradbury and Lichtenstein however term it ‘journalizing’ (2000: 559-560).) In integral inquiry and intuitive inquiry, both categories of transpersonal research methodologies, one is encouraged as interviewer and co-participant to pay attention to one's own inner life. This shows the level of self-reflection required for reflexivity in many methodologies (Wallis, 2004: 192; Harrington, 2004: 78-79). However, on a less personal note, keeping a research journal is likewise encouraged across disciplines and methodologies in order to be a reference later (Lillis and North, 2006: 116-118).

Heuristic methodology here meets the postmodern view discussed in my literature review in Chapter two, where Ingold states that ‘scientific activity is always, and necessarily, grounded in a poetics of dwelling’ (Ingold, 2000: 110). He demonstrates a view of early people's symbolic thinking as a holistic perspective that should inform postmodern scientific inquiry as well as our style of living in the world and with each other:

...their purpose is not to represent but to reveal, to penetrate beneath the surface of things so as to reach deeper levels of knowledge and understanding. It is at these levels that meaning is to be found (Ingold, 2000: 130).

These deeper levels are where one can perceive non-mundane awareness and enhanced relationality.

3.4 Stage One: First steps in researching the literature

The initial phase of the research journey involved learning the Italian libraries’ systems, databases, policies and so forth. The first stage involved a great deal of reading in Italian. My first choices of libraries were those of the university libraries in Milan, Italy where I was based during the research and fieldwork period: various campuses of the state University, *l'Università di Milano*, and Milan's private Catholic University, *il Sacro Cuore*. By the end of my first two semesters of the Italian literary research, the discovery of various branches and faculties of the state University of Milan in other parts of the city had proven extremely valuable, for they supplied academic texts in English. It was not only fruitful and productive to discover the political science library, and the British and American studies centre of the University, but they were also more comfortable and supportive environments. (It seems odd even now to remember this, from the various entries in my research journal. However, for some reason the staff was noticeably more courteous and helpful. My assumption is that they were perhaps more accustomed to foreign researchers.) Finding academic bookstores was

likewise a challenging quest, which was finally accomplished through the large independent bookstore in downtown Milan, *Hoepli*.

As this indicates, a non-speaker of Italian would not have been capable of doing this research, in this kind of depth and in the areas of Italy where this fieldwork took place. This is a point to underscore, as my language skills allowed *entrée* into areas, arenas and relationships which others would not have been able to explore. Nonetheless, it was still a challenge, as I had to quickly restore my prior fluency of over twenty years ago, as well as add new vocabulary. It is surprising how few people in Italy speak English still today, even in academia or in a sophisticated milieu like Milan; consequently, my near-second language skills in Italian were essential for the work.

Thus, as the above details, the journey and the learning curves associated with finding or purchasing research materials in Milan were at times steep and strangely uncomfortable. Perhaps it served an important methodological purpose: like the pedagogical theory positing that one learns best when out of one's 'comfort zone', the initial stages of struggle made me aware that, despite speaking Italian, having lived in Italy previously and feeling I 'knew' Italy, this was a new era in new environments, and I needed to look through a new prism.

3.4.1 Stage Two: Gathering original information

Basic rules of thumb: treatment of co-participants/interviewees

1) Practicality, etiquette and ethics

In the process of setting up the pilot study interviews, I created some general rules of discipline, materials and etiquette, not specific to the person or event. It was important that I:

- introduced myself as a scholar living in Italy and studying a certain topic in Italy;
- made it clear that I spoke Italian, and beyond that, knew the event or the person's work, the area, and so forth. In the case of an author, I also showed that I had read the person's book/s;
- checked my materials thoroughly before going to the festival or interview: notebook, extra pens, mobile phone and mobile phone contact numbers, digital recorder, extra batteries, maps, brochures;
- prepared a list of questions ahead of time. Also made certain to prepare maps, information on the town, on the festival's history, and so forth;
- explained the project and purpose, who would be reading the finished product, what it was for (academic purposes), and so forth;
- asked permission to record the interview and permission to fix a microphone to the person before commencing;
- wrote a note afterwards thanking the person initially contacted.

The point of noting this is to highlight that so-called 'common' courtesy is not really very common in today's world, sadly — in Italy or elsewhere. In addition to the fundamental

human codes of behaviour and ethics, which figure greatly in my personal philosophy, these facets of the methodology also helped to facilitate the possibility of a second contact.

2) Courtesy as a form of cultural sensitivity

Here the ethos of 'right relationship' arises again, this time in regards to 'right methodology'. In Italy in order to conduct a study of this sort, it is not enough merely to speak of ethical treatment of participants, but one must go the 'extra mile' and develop rules not only of ethics, but of courtesy and of proper relationship. This does not mean becoming intimate friends with people — it means being considerate. Other researchers have written extensively on this awareness, particularly in feminist studies (inter alia, Gilbert, 1994: 93). Jeanine Canty writes that in organic inquiry, which she considers to be 'the most qualitative of heuristic methodologies' (Canty, 2007: 67, 91), interviewing one's close community is perfectly acceptable. However, while it turned out that some members of my close community did participate in the studies, that is not necessary, nor is it necessary to become fast friends with one's collaborators/co-participants.

As mentioned above, courtesies on the telephone and in the interview cannot be ignored. Some of these: making eye contact, shaking hands at start and finish, or using socially-engendered salutations, (such as the Italian style of kissing on both cheeks), taking time to ask about the person's family — are important cultural traits. If conducting a study on another culture, a researcher should be observant and mindful of common cultural aspects — especially if not doing so would create an uncomfortable ambiance. One must be careful to remember people's names and to use the proper title. In Italian, it is proper to use the **formal form of address**, until given permission to use the informal. This would certainly be true in

Spanish as well (another language in which my work in the past has taken place), or in many other linguistic communities and cultures. Mentioned above is also the custom of sending notes afterwards. This is a rather ‘Anglo-Saxon’ custom, but it seemed to help establish and then to maintain the relationships. Thank you notes are not a common practice in Italy, and thus receive special attention. Giving out a business card or calling card is also an important way of establishing bona-fides.

As this thesis examines with regard to the cultural and symbolic importance of food and of dining together in Italy, the ultimate good relationship gesture is to eat a meal together, or failing that, simply share coffee or tea. Another example of going the extra mile, so to speak, is regarding the case of an interviewee being an author or a craftsperson. Then it would be most courteous to buy their book/s or some of their crafts. If they are cooking a meal, even if the food is not totally to one’s tastes, one should sample some — or at least, appear to do so. (This proved a challenge for me at times, given that my personal food habits are very different from the nature of some of the festival foods this thesis examines: donkey or horse sausage and stew, fried frogs, wild boar, worm-ridden cheese, and so on.) If these kinds of social mores do not come naturally, then the researcher must consider them as professional requirements, and as part of the methodology. Indeed such behaviour is professional behaviour, and thus good practices in all senses for those intending to pursue further professional academic or research goals after the dissertation research is completed.

3) Managing expectations: gender, power and loss upon leaving

Power differentials, socio-economic inequities, and gender-related issues are areas of scholarly attention in many feminist methodologies. Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen and

Liamputtang have discussed the challenges and difficulties in qualitative methodologies, particularly those working in sensitive situations and topics. However, a general statement is true: 'Qualitative researchers must initiate a rapport-building process from their first encounter with a participant' (2007: 331). Rapport building is absolutely key, in any qualitative research scenario. However, while my participant interviews were generally not on such sensitive or traumatic topics as the scholars above describe, some similar challenges arose, necessitating my own self-care, awareness of the rapport generated and attention to emotional 'boundaries' (2007: 328).

Whether in therapeutic contexts of traumatic or difficult topics such as their article discusses, the ethnographic debates of insider/outsider issues discussed in various authors' chapters in Blain, Ezzy and Harvey (2004), or the power differentials theorised by feminist writers, psychologists and so forth, the goal of managing expectations can have numerous meanings. In the case of my studies, it was the latter two areas usually, of insider/outside considerations and awareness of power differentials. For example, with regard to my work in Andrista and Paroldo, many of the people in rural areas of Italy struggle to make a living, and therefore discretion and sensitivity to socio-economic conditions were needed. Although this is Europe, as Sapelli has pointed out in his studies there has been a great difference between the economic and industrial development of southern and northern Europe (1995). Consequently people often live simpler lives than those of more prosperous urban communities, and one must structure one's interviews accordingly. Such sensitivities require, as mentioned above from Gilbert (1994), that one should dress appropriately; choose whether to reveal one's address, what means of transport to use, offer to buy the meal or tea/coffee; buy the books or crafts as mentioned. It is important to make it clear that one is not a journalist. Both good manners and professional practice require that one should clarify what a 'scholar' is and does.

For example, in addition to explaining the scope and audience of the study, it may be significant to manage expectations by explaining that it is very likely a scholar is *not* a person who will be developing business for the participants or their communities, nor arriving with a television crew in tow to aid in publicity of the festival and area.

Another challenge that arose in managing expectations is what Crociani-Windland refers to in her thesis chapter on methodology as the complexities of ‘being a woman among men’ (2007: 78). She is frank about her experiences, admitting: ‘In some situations I found myself threatened by men’s interest, while at other times gender and looks played in my favour’ (78). A woman alone in rural areas of Italy, particularly an American or Northern European, can arouse interest and curiosity that may have unpleasant, unwanted or at least unwarranted expectations. Gender relations in Italy are still operating in a ‘different paradigm’ from Northern Europe or North America, unfortunately. This can extend to the rural northern regions in which I did my fieldwork. Thus it was important in my experience that I kept my behaviour professional, style of dress modest or at least professional, and was clear about my time schedule, lodging arrangements, and so forth. While I rarely felt in actual danger from my formal or regular fieldwork participants, there were some uncomfortable moments when I was glad to have a companion, and to be able to leave when feelings of being ill at ease arose in me.

There are other aspects to unexpected feelings that can arise in fieldwork— and to its conclusion. Dickson-Swift et al discuss the fact that the researcher may need to exercise some sensitivity regarding the difficulties that may arise afterwards as well, in ‘leaving the field’ (2007: 328). This too coloured my research experience in that it has not been easy to maintain the relationships and close communication established while I was still living in

Italy. Likewise I have experienced personal sadness around the loss of the intensity of the festival experiences, (a common experience in those attending festivals), and the loosening of bonds established there. Given the nature of this thesis, leaving the field meant leaving the relationships with the human community, as well as those with the place or Nature community; hence my nostalgia was born out of the depth of my own sense of place with Italy. In one of Sarah Pike's evocative studies on her own festival fieldwork, the closing captured some of this bittersweet awareness:

Fieldwork, as many ethnographers have noted, is itself a transformative rite of passage. The researcher who entered the field as a neophyte leaves it more or less as an initiated member of a community of ethnographers. I left festivals behind and moved onto other projects with the sorrow and the loss one feels about precious time in one's past, or moving away from a place that was a beloved home to live in a different part of the country (Pike, 2004a: 112).

4) To influence outcomes and be influenced

This is a time-honoured topic of social scientist researchers and ethnographers, as well as other researchers across the sciences. It is generally accepted today that one's involvement or observation *always* influences the outcome of an experiment or the study in some way, no matter what the research is about or on, nor how carefully he/she tries not to have an impact. (Anderson, 1998: 76-77; Lincoln and Guba, 1989: 97-99; Moustakas, 1994: 21). This realisation has been at the heart of many new paradigm thought developments, such as the evolution of living systems theory (Capra, 1996; Macy, 1998). It is also generally accepted today that the researcher her or himself is likewise altered by the study undertaken. The intertwining of researcher and research is often called reactivity, and is a hotly debated topic in the academy (Hutton, 2004: 171-179, inter alia). Since my topic is on sense of place and community festivals it was easy sometimes simply to be an observer and to feel as though I was not unduly impacting the outcome of the festival, largely. For example, the festivals would go on whether I was there or not; the dinner would happen, the dances, the costumes,

and so forth. Many of the traditions that were investigated were not dependent on tourists. My presence was a small factor in the life of the town, the organisers or the locals involved. To give a more precise example: in the case of the *Badalisc*, the horned serpent figure in Andrista, Lombardy, the whole tiny hamlet seemed to know of my coming, yet — to my knowledge — it still meant nothing to the unfolding of the actual festival. It did mean something to the organisers to know that outsiders cared and were documenting it. However, the *Badalisc* would come out of the woods each year to give his speech whether foreign researchers observed or not.

Discretion in appearance and behaviour adds to the researcher's care in trying not to influence the *festa* or *sagra* being observed, or at the least, in trying to influence minimally, and in a general, positive manner. Although I wandered through festivals with a camera, recorder and notebook, which did make me obvious and also did make me look like a journalist, my efforts at keeping a low profile and being somewhat low-key in my behaviour lessened the impact. It was also important to be able to quickly explain that I was a '*studiosa americana*', an American scholar, which seemed to deflect and deflate some of the interest. (It also often made people more receptive and open to talking.) The areas of greater impact were the festivals with a Pagan or Wiccan community component, where I already had relationships with the participants. These primarily took place in Milan itself. In some cases some of the participants might have been more influenced by my presence, as I was known to them from an 'insider' status, and likewise my own experience was influenced by theirs. Paroldo, the home of Piedmont's traditional healer and witchcraft traditions was another area of greater insider/outsider subjectivity and sensitivity (Pike, 2004a; Harvey, 2004a). However, keeping to my own rules of courtesy and right relationship aided in this, as well as the conscientious self-reflexivity that I tried to maintain. These considerations intersect with ethical

considerations as well as the more general ethos of compassion and empathy in research. According to Rosemarie Anderson and others, these are of profound importance in qualitative research, especially in ‘intuitive inquiry’, a methodological philosophy that has influenced the techniques and ethos here (1998: 71-94).

5) Conscientious and discrete treatment of identity

All the participants in the study’s fieldwork (or pilot studies) have aliases, as per the university requirements for work with human participants. All signed release forms for the formal interviews, and I asked permission to take photos. My laptop computer was passworded — another university requirement regarding ethics in research with participants. Generally my research was not so sensitive that it merited extra care in using aliases, but I have been meticulous nonetheless. Given the trust and openness in interviews of my participants, there were instances where their confiding in me could have had deleterious effect. One such instance has to do with Celtic New Year in Milan, where the participants could have been or could still be impacted negatively by the critical observations they made about the festival organisers. Thus constant discretion and conscientiousness in not exploiting or damaging one’s participants is required, even when working with seemingly ‘innocent’ topics.

3.4.2 Choices of Geographical Regions, Participants and Events

1) Outsider, not insider

My position as researcher entered into my choice of communities in which to carry out my ethnography. Ultimately I chose not to conduct ethnography among the Pagan community

exclusively, at exclusively Pagan festivals. As mentioned above, I had a certain 'insider' status from my long-time work and involvement in the international Pagan community. Consequently I was aware of and often did participate in various Piedmont and Lombardy Pagan festivals (Howell, 2008b). However, other than the participants in Celtic New Year in Milan detailed in Chapter five, I chose not to carry out ethnographic work as an insider scholar at the growing number of Wiccan and Druidic festivals in Northern Italy.

There are many reasons for this choice, some cultural, some personal. However, the overriding scholarly and methodological rationale came out of a desire to observe, investigate and record the experience of sense of place and agency of place that people outside the Pagan community, in 'mundane' spaces, reported. My choice of niche and scope were festivals that were open to the public, that were more 'typical' gastronomic, cultural or calendrical festivals. My goal was to show that even in spaces that were not intensely passionate, deeply alternative, week-long events, (such as Pike's research documents (2001, 2004a, 2004b)), heterotopia still can emerge in seemingly 'mundane' spaces; polychronic space is experienced and made evident; and place-power and agency of the land still impacts humanity's awareness.

2) Place-based study, place-based research

Despite the fact that academic researchers and particularly ethnographers stray far from the halls and towers of academia, it is nonetheless not always easy to remain grounded and authentic. The development of transpersonal sources, heuristic and embodied methods of inquiry aid in keeping one's perspectives grounded in life. In my study it would have seemed inappropriate to live in Milan, Lombardy and Piedmont, exploring the topic of sense of place,

and to ignore the sense of place in areas and people around me. My topic would have been truly an academic exercise and would have lost both integrity and value.

C. G. Jung is credited with creating a term for the coincidences of patterns and symbols which crop up in our lives, and which seem meaningful or auspicious: 'synchronicity', (Bowman, 1998: 28; 30; Crowley, 1996:79). As one who believes in synchronicity, it felt appropriate to pay attention to the synchronicities in the research journey which led me to various events, places and people in Northern Italy conveying messages about sense of place, such as festivals.

3) A reasonable goal

The PhD is a long-distance race, with long-term goals that require continued focus and stamina in order to reach them. Therefore, it is important to utilise the early phases of the PhD process to set goals, work with them, devise personal strategies and time frames for writing, for publishing and presenting, and so forth. An important *proviso* in making the thesis an attainable goal is to choose fieldwork that is logistically achievable, which in my case meant choosing pilot study and fieldwork areas that were reasonably close to home, with people and in areas both safe and accessible. While the creation of a PhD thesis is a long and arduous journey, there are various aids such as the above that help to make the outcome a more 'reasonable goal' (Dunleavy, 2003: 217-225; Rugg and Petre, 2004: 161-181).

4) Regions and events

My choices of regions and festivals for fieldwork had much to do with synchronicity and serendipity. The opportunity to live in the north of Italy had emerged, unexpectedly, in the region of Lombardy, with its neighbouring area Piedmont. Due to my personal involvements, as well as my research interests in place-based practices and ancient ‘sacred sites’, I was intrigued by the mix of ancient cultures whose settlements were located in these regions: pre-Roman Gallo-Celtic cultures; then Romans; then post-Roman northern European Lombard tribes. Likewise, through fortuitous opportunities, I began to learn about the diverse local and regional festivals — *sagre* and *feste*. Having read Italian history and culture as an undergraduate, having lived in Italy in the past, and being of Italian heritage as well, it became apparent that these northern Italian *sagre* and *feste* were notable, some with exceptional elements. They seemed to be authentically place-based events, tied to the geographic particularities and regional traditions of the north. Thus I began to focus on five specific festivals in four locations.

3.4.3 Stage Three: Pilot Study and Fieldwork

A) Pilot Study choices:

- 1) Omegna, Lake Orta (*Lago di Orta*), Piedmont: the Pumpkin Festival, in October and Carnival in January-February
- 2) Paroldo, Piedmont: St. Martin’s Summer festival, in November
- 3) Milan, Lombardy: Celtic New Year festival at the Sforzesco Castle, in October
- 4) Andrista, Lombardy: the festival of the *Badalisc*, Epiphany, in January

None of these places was farther than 200 miles from home. I contacted the primary organisers of each event, and also some of the participants. In total, as a beginning 'survey', I interviewed two people connected with each event. I later interviewed one or two more for each event, and listed further participants for the fieldwork. I attended the events and carried out spontaneous interviews *in situ* as well. As far as possible I used a combination of the digital recorder with simultaneous note-taking to prevent any chances of losing the information. (This had happened in the first pilot study interview experience, where the digital recorder failed. However, from prior professional experience, I had transcribed it immediately and had taken notes, therefore the interview was salvageable.) Consequently, backing up the information constantly was a regular part of my personal procedures.

B) Fieldwork

This phase lasted approximately one calendar year, from 2008 to 2009. If the pilot studies are included, then it actually spanned a year and a half, having begun in 2007. In the process of deciding whether those same festivals would be the focus of the fieldwork, I attended other festivals and events in Piedmont and Lombardy, some of which were in the same towns. These gave insights and information to the first phases of the study, and underscored the ultimate choices. Consequently I decided that in my field work I would research the same events as those chosen for the pilot studies, at the same geographic locations (although many of the participants were different in the actual fieldwork.)

My ultimate choices of festivals sprang out of a number of factors — some which have been discussed already, some which have not. They were:

- place-based traditions involving local people, local history, traditions or food and agriculture; examples of ‘performing place’ that were not church related;
- demonstrations of reasonable evidence that an ‘authentic’ atmosphere existed, i.e. one not strictly commercial or divorced from community;
- feasibility and reasonable accessibility to the festival.

Although some of the pilot study participants were not part of the fieldwork in its second phase, we have remained in contact. Those who participated in both phases were likewise very helpful in deepening my understandings of the regions, events and traditions. As the fieldwork went on, I also carried out interviews of a general nature, with people not necessarily involved in the festivals chosen, to aid in further understanding Milan, Lombardy or Piedmont history, regional customs, and so forth. Even random conversations with local residents, particularly if they were long-term residents, fed this understanding and played a role in the thesis development.

Procedures:

➤ Laying the groundwork

Hermeneutical analysis began before the actual interview, and certainly before the final analysis at the end of the fieldwork. It began with the historical perspective that enters into the groundwork laid for each interview, and reached into various interconnecting fields of research. The *Badalisc* festival on the 5-6th of January each year in northern Lombardy is a good example. In addition to attending the festival, I spent hours on the Internet researching Italian sources, made numerous phone calls, wrote numerous emails and visited the area

outside of festival times to carry out interviews, as well as to visit local archives. Among the topics researched were:

- the history of Andrista and the nearby village Cevo;
- the origins of the festival;
- the speech that the central figure portraying the *Badalisc* gives each year;
- local lore and archaeology.

A similar process took place regarding Paroldo, Piedmont and their original witchcraft traditions. Prior to attending any events in Paroldo, I: a) read a wide range of Italian sources, including non-academic works or historical and literary works; b) laid the groundwork by searching the Internet on the area's history and lore, examined how it differs from other small towns in its region. In all the steps and areas I left room for potential synchronicity to help the process, as is appropriate in heuristic research (Anderson, 1998; Canty, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). I already had relationships with some of the participants, but in other cases, new rapport developed, and this too grew organically as the research developed. These relationships were not only with the human participants, but also with the more-than-human, as my own sense of place bonds grew with the geographic locations involved in the study.

In the final analysis in Chapter seven, as well as in Chapter six on the actual fieldwork experiences, it will be obvious that I chose to observe and participate in two festivals in Omegna, Piedmont. It is the only location in which two were studied and analysed for the thesis. (Although as stated above, I attended or researched other festivals in all the locations as well as elsewhere, in preparation for choosing festivals for the pilot study and fieldwork.) In order to briefly explain this choice in Omegna, the reasoning behind choosing to study both

the Pumpkin festival and the Carnival was that both were place-based and both were organised by the same people. In the interviews with the organisers, they often referred to both. (My interpretation of this fact is that it arose out of the thesis' focus on sense of place, which I had stated to them, and due to their belief in the powerful sense of place of both festivals.) While indeed both festivals were representative of the locals' profound bonds with place, the contrast between the two highlighted useful and pertinent aspects of festival. Consequently, although it may seem anomalous given the study's protocol of one festival in other locations, I chose to observe two events in Omegna.

➤ Interviewing

One of my first areas of focus was to set up interviews with the organisers of the festivals to learn of their own engagement with place and community. (In the case of the Milan Celtic New Year this process took a number of months and some sleuthing tactics, as they were not particularly accessible by phone.) Next to the organisers themselves, my focus was to hear the experiences of people participating in some integral way in the festivals, such as vendors, presenters, re-enactors, and so on. It was especially interesting to hear, if they were locals themselves, what was their own sense of place about the festival area. The participants who were recorded for the formal interviews all signed consent forms and were given aliases.

The next phase of interviewing was the spontaneous interviews on the day of the festival/weekend of the festival. Among the topics of focus here was to learn of visitors' experience of the festival, why they had come, what did they feel about the sense of place there, whether they had participated before, and to observe any possible feeling of liminality or the often ensuing *comunitas*. This involved a different set of techniques, obviously, in

terms of having to stop people in the fair as they went by or stopped at a booth, or sat down to eat, and so on. It was in some ways more challenging and certainly required a different set of procedural concepts and techniques — all of them still involving the personal rules of courtesy and cultural sensitivity laid out in sections 3.4.1 and 3.5.2. As the fieldwork reviews, in Italy dining and food are held in high regard, even revered, and interrupting someone's meal could be seen as inappropriate. Consequently it was important to be sensitive about those moments. Each formally interviewed participant or co-researcher was interviewed a minimum of twice, with the key participants interviewed perhaps three or four times. As mentioned above, the formally interviewed participants all signed consent forms. However, those stopped informally and not recorded during the festivals did not sign consent forms. I prepared questions ahead of time as a basis for the formal interviews, but also allowed many more questions and topics to arise organically and spontaneously at the time of the interview. Some information with principal participants was shared in emails as well, and in a couple of cases, participants answered questions first via email. There was a minimum of three interviewees/co-researchers connected with each event, and in most cases at least double that number.

➤ Results

The outcome was the choice discussed above of four principal locations. The interview process and fieldwork outcome was that an approximate total of one hundred and seven people was interviewed, both in formal interviews and in spontaneous encounters in festivals. The research focus was on the principle five *feste* or *sagre* (with secondary experience of four more in those areas). Chapters five and six discuss the fieldwork in depth, followed by Chapter seven and the concluding chapter that discuss the analyses and conclusions drawn

from these inquiries. In hermeneutical and heuristic fashion more questions and hypotheses surfaced during the entire process, suggesting possibilities for further research and writing on Italy.

3.5 Scales of engagement chosen as means of measurement

In the third year of the thesis study and the second of the fieldwork, it became evident that a highly subjective, personal discussion such as sense of place could be clarified and ‘unpacked’ more lucidly with some form of measurement or scaling. The thesis focus on engagement with place, by individuals and communities, as evidenced by rituals and festivals in specific places, led to the concept of using a tool called a ‘Scales of Engagement’. In essence, the purpose was to find a method of comparing, contrasting and measuring — albeit very generally and theoretically — the depth of the community and the festival’s involvement and engagement with place. The levels of comparison gauge the organisers’ connection with the local, grassroots community, the sense of place demonstrated by the festival itself as well as the experience reported by participants.

Theresa Thorkildsen discusses the techniques for ‘Measuring Cultural Rituals’ in her 2005 text on methodologies of measurement. She explains the research into cultural rituals: ‘Participant-observation research involves the measurement of settings and the rituals that take place within them’ (2005: 489). She offers a caveat to researchers:

Cultural rituals are most easily measured using methods in which investigators remember that observations alone do not constitute ethnography. To translate behavior into actions and acts, cultural theorists typically look for guidance from community members on what to observe, record and interpret (2005: 490).

This thesis used ethnographical methods of observation, recording and interviewing, with the help of community members, in a traditional ethnographic style. However, since the topic is

not easily quantifiable and is certainly qualitative, to justify my assertions and conclusions I designed a four-part scale of analysis, drawing on four primary areas of evaluation, at the end of the study process. Thorkildsen writes of summarising evidence on cultural rituals saying that ‘investigators typically look for confirming and disconfirming evidence by connecting fragments from a larger corpus’ (2005: 492). The scales of engagement helped the study to ‘connect the dots’ on how, where and in what degree of profundity the festivals engage with place, and aided in clarifying the analyses.

3.5.1 Engagement’s many nuances

The concept of sense of place crosses disciplines and is universal; it can apply to many experiences, fields of study and methodologies. For this thesis the next step was to find out what fields of study have chosen a scale of engagement and how such a tool could relate to the many nuances of ‘engagement’. Having spent many months of research on this methodology, in a wide variety of fields where some were more quantitative, technical or scientific than others, ultimately four studies stood out. The disciplines reviewed spanned the fields of archaeology, earth science, housing studies, philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, sociology and urban design. Two utilise measured indexes with categories and enumerated values; the third gives scales as perceived in textual analysis. The fourth, perhaps the most pertinent in certain elements of its focus, discusses how to create a literature review and ‘facet design’ for a psychometric study on sense of place. The four studies’ ‘Scales of Engagement’ all draw from differing understandings and methods of scaling. Chapter two’s literature review has elaborated on these precedents in detail, in section 2.16.

In brief, all four have a specific focus that relates to this study in some precise way:

- postmodern urban engagement (or disengagement) with home, neighbourhood, and community (Ellison and Burrows, 2007);
- an ancient culture's involvement with place and identity through structuring of land and creation of ritual sites (Tilley et al, 2000);
- coping strategies and stress alleviation techniques as linked to sense of place from a psychiatric and healthcare perspective (Blount et al, 2008);
- psychometric study design organising seven sub-elements of sense of place from a health and well-being perspective (Williams et al, 2008).

My chosen format created a style of index with numerical values, rating the festivals from 1, which designated the least engaged or lowest sense of place index, to 4 for the most profound or the greatest engagement. Chapter seven's section 7.3 gives the elaborated Scale of Engagement index that shows the outcome of the style and method of analysis.

3.5.2 Ethnography as praxis

The statement opening this chapter is from Johannes Fabian, quoted by Margaret Rodman: 'Our goal should be to transform ethnography into a praxis capable of making the Other present' (Fabian, 1990: 771, cited in Rodman, 2003: 212). Rodman critically reviews what ethnographic work can achieve today, returning power to those voices overlooked and disenfranchised, rather than further disempowering as earlier perspectives of anthropology often did. Her theories on multilocality and multivocality inspired some of the critical work on Chapters five and six in reference to communities and histories in those regions which

have been traditionally silenced or oppressed. While Rodman principally writes of human communities, she also shows sensitivity to place, power and to 'grounding of identity in place' (2003: 215) in her use of 'Other'. Foucault influenced Rodman with his theories on power as he has done in Denzin's methodologies as well. Like Foucault, Denzin and Rodman stress the awareness the researcher must maintain regarding discourse and the ensuing effects in the world.

The researcher (...) carries the power and prestige of science into the field. Consequently, Foucault insists that we look at cultural forms and practices not in terms of their "meanings" but in terms of their effects both on those to whom they are addressed and on the world in which they circulate. The effects of a discourse are seen in the experiences it produces. This focus on effects helps illuminate the importance of power within any system of discourse (Denzin, 2009: 405).

Barbara Tedlock discusses how in essence the recent evolution in ethnographic studies creates a movement and a philosophy of work that 'directly engages with the critical social issues of our time' (Tedlock, 2008: 151-171). To follow the line of enquiry above, the examination of the effects of dominant discourse, a critical social issue of our time is alienation and emotional or psychological dysfunctionality. One source for this loss of health derives from our societal loss of bonds with community and with place. This loss of sense of place has impacted the health of individuals and societies across the developed world (DeMiglio and Williams, 2008: 15-42; Jacobs, 2003, cited in Relph, 2008: 32; Fullilove, 1996 and 2004, cited in DeMiglio and Williams, 2008: 26). Tedlock sees ethnography as having the power to 'emotionally engage, educate and move the public to action' (2008: 159). Denzin offers the concept that 'thick descriptions capture and record the voices of lived experience or "the prose of the world"' (Denzin, 2009: 401). Indeed my hopes for this work and the following chapters' thick description stories from the field are to help create new awareness and new discussion through the rediscovery of sense of place, of community, and of Nature as the Other. In this sense, the aim and methodology here could appropriately be categorised as

organic inquiry; according to Clements et al 'the goal of organic research is personal transformation for the reader of the study, the co-researchers and the researcher' (1998: 125). My ultimate goal is to diffuse the thesis' concepts and stories by publishing the thesis in both English and in Italian, with this aim of enhanced awareness and perhaps, being optimistic, new wellbeing.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the intersection of heuristic and hermeneutical methodologies which weave together in my research, in this thesis and in my personal philosophy. The discussion has come full circle, bridging the centuries with the classical Socratic search for the good and the beautiful that lies at the basis of hermeneutics (Smith, 1991), and joining the latest developments in methodologies such as organic inquiry and indwelling (Braun and Anderson, 1998).

The thesis epistemology draws on the work of many scholars in the related fields of research and theory, such as Anderson, Blain, Ezzy, Foucault, Gadamer, Gilbert, Grimes, Harvey, Hutton, Ingold, Mantin, and others also mentioned in this chapter, as well as in the previous literature review chapter. The scholars whose models reinforced my ideas on the development of a scale of engagement are discussed here in brief, and more in detail in Chapters two and seven. My belief is that this methodology has been culturally sensitive and appropriate to my work in Italy, as well as pertinent to the content of this thesis, which is both phenomenological as well as abstract. The hermeneutic and heuristic methodologies employed have deep roots in European culture that were appropriate to a study with Italian

participants. They also helped me to ‘cross-check’ myself, validating and re-evaluating the work, and keeping an appropriate level of reflexivity and compassion.

The basic framework and foundations to this thesis have now been fully discussed in Chapters one, two and three. The following chapters move on to the actual components of the construction itself, examining the meaning and tradition of festival in Italy, and why it is relevant to a study of sense of place. In the fieldwork chapters that follow, place-based stories and traditions emerge in the *sagre* and *feste* that form the core of this thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PHENOMENON OF THE COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

*When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,
Folk dance like a wave of the sea;
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,
My brother in Mocharabuiee.*

*I passed my brother and cousin:
They read in their books of prayer;
I read in my books of songs
I bought at the Sligo fair.*

*When we come at the end of time
To Peter sitting in state,
He will smile on the three old sinners,
But call me first through the gate;*

*For the good are always the merry,
Save by an evil chance,
And the merry love the fiddle,
And the merry love to dance
(Yeats, 1976:71).*

4.0 Making meaning, performing place

This chapter explores the relationship between the study of northern Italian festivals and the overall topic of sense of place. It reviews theories such as why an abundance of festivals take place in Italy, and how these public rituals and festivals answer universal needs through symbolism, relationship and embodied experiences of place. The chapter briefly examines Italy's two most famous festival traditions of *palio* and Carnival, and it relates these two to the critical thought on the festival and place supporting this study.

The poem cited above by Irish poet William Butler Yeats demonstrates the redeeming power that some believe music — such as the music of festivals and fairs — can offer. Participants in this study expressed their view that the festival's communal meals could have such a potent

effect as well. Whatever the perception and experience, it is universally evident that festivals create meaning and perform meaningful places. They help people explore community and the bonds found there, with one another as well as with place and space. This was demonstrated in the thesis fieldwork, as people stopped their everyday lives — or better said, enhanced their everyday lives — by participating in a festival. Renewed community well-being can evolve from the festival through the experience of a greater and deeper sense of ‘dwelling’ (Derrett, 2003; Gardiner, 1993).

4.1 Spring and the sloop ‘Clearwater’ comes back

The journey towards this topic and thesis has been a convergence in some ways. A powerful memory sprang to mind when embarking on this topic. Given the relevance of this memory to my thesis and in keeping with the heuristic methodology, here is an account. My hometown of Nyack, NY is on the banks of the Hudson in the Hudson Valley of New York State. When I was a young teen, in the midst of the burgeoning environmental movement in America, a significant festival celebrating the Hudson River began to take place there. One spring weekend a remarkable sailing ship came to dock in Nyack. It was a striking sloop called the ‘Clearwater’, and its purpose (which is on-going today, as it has continued its environmental advocacy for many years) was to educate people about the Hudson bioregion and ecosystems through the creation of a riverfront festival. Like many children, I was invited to sail on the sloop, and this memory became significant for me. This was not only because of the chance to sail on the Sloop Clearwater, but because a well-known folk singer and activist performed for us, Pete Seeger. Seeger is (at time of writing) in his nineties, and is a performer who has devoted his life to improving the health of the Hudson Valley through decades of environmental activism through music and innovative programmes with young people. That

first experience of the Clearwater Festival made an important impression on me as a young girl; it was not the first time I had watched the Hudson's shore from the deck of a boat, but it was my first time sailing while feeling engaged in a powerful movement and purpose. Each year when the Clearwater docked again, the town would hold a festival with the intention of raising awareness about the Hudson and its ecological needs. People became excited as the date approached, and the festival developed into a postmodern rite of Spring. An annual festival can ignite such fulfilling feelings of consistency, of an atavistic reassurance that despite life's unpredictable quality and many vicissitudes, some seasonal occurrences are dependable. However, the Sloop Clearwater is more than that alone: it is today known as 'America's Environmental Flagship', and according to its own website, some 400,000 children have experienced the Hudson from its decks. The nonprofit's progressive style of uniting sense of place with place-based activism through music and enjoyment of Nature is an example of some of the principles of this thesis. As the organisation's website states,

Each summer Clearwater re-connects Hudson Valley residents with their cultural heritage and traditions by bringing them down to the river for the Great Hudson River Revival, the country's oldest music and environmental festival (Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, 2010).

Heidegger's meaning of *umwelt* is described by John Gray.

Dwelling refers to the creation of meaningful places that together form a surrounding world (Umwelt). It entails people's relationship to the world, motivated by concern and consequent involvement (Gray, 2003: 232).

Ingold's 'dwelling perspective' likewise draws from his understanding of Heidegger's phenomenological view of dwelling. He too theorises on meaning-making, describing it as '...acts of dwelling (that) are preceded by acts of worldmaking' (Ingold, 2000: 179). We make the world around us through our thoughts and our actions, as well as through symbol and metaphor. We perform our meanings through art that expresses these metaphors. 'Human

beings, then, inhabit the various houses of culture, pre-erected upon the universal ground of nature – including the universals of human nature’ (Ingold, 2000: 179). Art, symbol, metaphor and ritual are universals of human nature. We often express this universal language through ritual where, as Knott wrote: ‘Ritual then becomes a central creative process by which people make a meaningful world that they can inhabit’ (2005:101). These themes are relevant to my fieldwork in Italy: themes of community as intertwined with embodied experiences of place, of identity, and of purpose likewise bonded to sense of place. My childhood memory of the Clearwater festival illustrates the concepts discussed above that meaning-making through a festival experience can inspire profound sense of place and consequent engagement in generations of people. The following sections in this chapter demonstrate how Italian festivals not only make meaning, but also communicate meaning, through embodiment of symbol and metaphor, to and from the world, conveying it on the two-way bridge of the festival ritual.

4.2 Why study festival

Festival culture is — citing Ingold's term as quoted above — a ‘universal of human nature’. Festivals are in many cases community rituals; rituals of all kinds offer metaphors and symbols that resonate for human beings. Symbols ring atavistic, ancient chimes in the deeper levels of our human mind, resonating across culture and time in our unconscious levels of consciousness. Catherine Bell identifies ‘six categories of ritual action’:

1. Rites of passage of "life crisis" rituals.
2. Calendrical and commemorative rites.
3. Rites of exchange and communion.
4. Rites of affliction.
5. Rites of feasting, fasting and festivals.
6. Political rituals (Bell, 1997: 94).

According to Bell's categories, the festivals observed in this thesis would generally fall into two categories, that of number two and of number five. One of the festivals, Celtic New Year in Milan, has nuances of category six as well through unstated political purposes of the organisers who are closely tied to a political party.

The importance of symbolism in ritual is also discussed in Fiona Bowie's study on ritual (2006), where she breaks down various scholars' opinions.

Bloch bases his understanding of ritual on a universal biological process. Rituals play on themes of vitality and mortality. They link time and transcendence (145).

In seeing the universality of festival and ritual, it appears logical that the drive to honour a calendrical phase or moment could at its root be biological. Ancient cultures across the globe believed that they were obligated to honour certain phases of the year in order to insure the fertility of the Earth or the wellbeing of their crops and herds. This urge to propitiate the Earth or the divinity, or whatever the belief system might be, springs from a biological need: survival. As Bowie states, these are themes of vitality and mortality. For one of my participants in Lombardy the *Badalisc* festival sprang from such needs and traditions explicitly. Vitality, mortality, memory, honouring place through annual actions and rites – these are universals of humanity, which can be made place-specific, as the following fieldwork chapters demonstrate.

4.2.1 The transformational quality of festival

The poetry quote starting off this chapter from Yeats (poet, playwright, statesman and creator/practitioner of ritual) may be merely amusing, exaggerating the power of a country festival or carnival and its gay music. On the other hand, such community gatherings, when

ritualised, can indeed have transformational power. The Sloop Clearwater's forty years of environmental and artistic festivals give evidence of their successful history for Hudson River communities. Bell wrote:

Ritual as the expression of paradigmatic values of death and rebirth; ritual as a mechanism for bringing the individual into the community and establishing a social entity; or ritual as a process for social transformation, for catharsis, for embodying symbolic values, for defining the nature of the real... (Bell, 1997: 89).

Some of the literature reviewed, as well as my own fieldwork indicates that indeed the manner in which festivals and community rituals 'bring the individual into community' are health-inducing and vitality restoring. Some participants in both the Lombardy and Piedmont fieldwork saw the communal meals involved in Italian festivals as, not only essential but 'sacred'. My argument is that rituals or festivals create a space for a unique, out of the ordinary experience of time that allows awareness of the ineffable and the numinous to slip through. In this case the ineffable and the numinous include the feeling and the expression of one's bonds with place. Discovering and acknowledging such bonds and intimate connection can have healing, transformational effects as they re-weave the unraveled threads of relationship, with home, with land, with community.

My fieldwork demonstrates that festivals are more important to a community than perhaps they may appear at first glance. A *festa* or *sagra* is not merely an opportunity to see one's neighbours, have a good meal or a few drinks and laughs, perhaps while wearing fun fancy dress. At times they are that as well. However, as visitors it would be easy to mistake an Italian *festa* or *sagra* as nothing more than a country fair, a costume party, or an unusual race. Instead an Italian *festa* or *sagra* can have a deeply archetypal, psycho-spiritual significance which is simple to overlook. Bell believed ritual can be 'the expression of paradigmatic values' (1997: 89). We must neither overlook nor underestimate the externalities but rather

observe them carefully for such features as masks, costuming and staging convey purposeful messages. In cultures like Italy's where costuming and masking are manifestations of more profound aspects, the admonition to observe carefully is particularly apt. To use Grimes' term, the festival becomes an 'exteriorization of phenomenology' (Grimes, 1975: 508). Italy is the land of *Bella Figura*, of cutting the right figure and of making the right impression; in other words, externalities are noted, are very significant and are embedded with culture and history. Going beyond fashion or mere theatricality, the festival can become an exteriorisation of deeply psychological as well as ecological or political factors. Like the child who is not emotionally or psychologically healthy without early bonding, bonds with place have been shown to offer a positive effect on our emotional development and wellbeing (DeMiglio and Williams, 2008; Manzo, 2008). Ecopsychology, psychiatry and other therapeutic fields have identified this phenomenon and shown evidence for it, as my literature review has discussed.

4.2.2 The 'jolt' we seek

Festivals may hit us forcefully with a shock that can jolt us into a different state of consciousness or into a new focus. Michael Gardiner writes of the relationship between ecological awareness, place and festival. He observes that festival 'jolts us out of our normal expectations (sic) and epistemological complacency' (1993: 799). (It may be presumptuous, but my interpretation of this is as a typo and that Gardiner meant to say 'jolts us out of our normal *expectations*'.) This useful turn of phrase, 'epistemological complacency', has many implications. Gardiner's image of a festival as 'jolting' its participants into awakening to new epistemologies seems to offer the capability for new or heightened sense of place, among other intriguing possibilities. This view of festival is in line with Foucault's and Bell's theories. Foucault's theories on heterotopia indicate that heterotopias are universals, and crisis

heterotopias are — (or *were*, since he saw such moments as disappearing or being transformed) — also a human universal (1998: 179-180). Bell included ‘life crisis’ rituals as one primary category of ritual. These moments bring enhanced clarity as we are jolted out of mundane, everyday awareness, and can indeed signal or create new awareness. Turner’s well-studied conceptions of ritual’s capacity for creating *communitas* were intertwined with his theories on the crises that arise in life and in community, which he termed social dramas (Turner, 1982: 61-87). Perhaps these ‘jolts’, or the desire for such jolts, like other rationales for festival also have a physiological basis. LaChapelle sees community ritual as an intimate part of the life of ‘stable “sustainable” cultures’ (1995: 57). She believes that for human beings ritual and ceremony can offer a ‘sophisticated social and spiritual technology, refined through many thousands of years of experience’ (58). In her examination of ritual and festival she describes how

Festivals connect the conscious with the unconscious, the right and left hemispheres of the brain, the cortex with the older three brains (...), as well as connecting the human with the nonhuman: the earth, the sky, the plants and animals (LaChapelle, 1995: 59).

These varied theories offer some reflections on the transformational quality of festival and ritual, for individuals and for communities.

4.2.3 Place as family

Derrett states that ‘festivals provide a vehicle to preserve and celebrate culture and facilitate family reunions’ (2003: 51). Quoting from Ferris (1996) he claims ‘place is a family affair’ (2003: 51). Many indigenous spiritual traditions would agree that place is indeed a part of one’s family, and the occasions afforded annually to celebrate place and community and perhaps even more symbolically, to celebrate ritual together with one’s community or loved

ones, reconnect human beings to the 'circle of their relations'. This expression is attributed to American Indian culture. The Lakota language expression is written by Anglos as *mitakuye oyasin*, and translated as 'all of my relatives, all of us, everyone. This means all human beings upon this earth, all living things down to the tiniest insect, the tiniest plant' (Lame Deer and Erdoes, 1972: 207). Ingold's work among indigenous cultures has given rise to his theories on land where the 'relational model' allows place to become active, vital and regarded as kin (2000: 148-150).

While it may seem far-fetched to discuss European culture in northern Italy along with American Indian culture, the festival fieldwork demonstrated the relationality with place, with town, with community held by certain people in the north of Italy. The villages and natural settings of Paroldo and Andrista clearly are held in the kind of esteem and loyalty that one reserves for 'family' for the residents there.

4.3 Italian 'meaning-making' with embodied experiences of *festa* and *sagra*

The events studied here can be largely categorised as festivals based on either the calendar year cycle of Italian Catholic saints' days, *feste* or 'feast days' — that is what they are literally called in the Church, echoing earlier customs; or these festivities are events based on agricultural celebrations. The agricultural events are called *sagre*, where they have to do with particular products, local industry or local crops. In some cases, they are arguably both. Saint Martin's Summer (*L'Estate di San Martino*) in November in Paroldo, as discussed in Chapter six, provides an example of this, where organisers have explicitly linked its origin with the end of the harvest season, with Hallowe'en (which they also call *Samhain*), as well as with their local patron saint, Saint Martin.

Tak observes in his studies of Italian festivals (2000):

There are for example family resemblances between local and ancient festivals like Lupercalia, Martinis Marvos, Bona Dea, Lemuria and Diana, which should come as no surprise because the Fathers of the Church modelled holidays after these festivals and often as their substitutes (Tak, 2000: 99).

He also notes that many of Calvello's festivals (a town in the mountainous area of Basilicata where Tak studied principally) resemble 'rituals of Northern and Central Europe' (99). Since the Lombards like other Northern rulers created kingdoms in the south of Italy as well as the north, it is possible that their influence played a part in this similarity. However, as he writes, we cannot make assumptions about their origins and should rather give the credit to agricultural traditions with similarity across a feudal Europe.

Thus, even if we start — with a total lack of data — from the assumption that Calvello's rituals were of Roman and Lombard origin, the nature of the ritual cycle still remains obscure. It is clear that a certain fusion of those sources took place at some point. (...) We are dealing with the same sort of models which derived from the melting pots of cultural inheritance from different historical periods. Local religions were local, but not local inventions. The survival of and the resemblances (there were also marked differences) between rituals, were not the result of isolation, but of contacts (and diffusion), and last but not least, the similarities in local circumstances evolved in a certain type of agrarian economy that dominated in Europe (Tak, 2000: 100).

In my work in the north of Italy some participants in my study claimed ancient Celtic or Lombard heritage and survival of traditions. As an ethnographer whose focus is sense of place and how a festival may or may not express that, Tak's theory is pertinent and helped remind me to keep my focus on the present and on people's experiences. Another useful assertion from Tak is that scholars studying rituals need to be aware of the whole picture and not take the festivals in isolation, as a snapshot frozen in time. He has been engaged with examining the power structures involved in Calvello and the other regions he has studied (Tak, 2000: 11, 12, 14; 137-155; 209; 214-215 — inter alia). This is another way of keeping the study attuned to forces at work on the ritual or festival, as well as on the land and the people

involved. Chapters five and six discuss some larger political themes which surfaced in the fieldwork's festivals.

When discussing my thesis with Italians, people began immediately to list their favourite festivals, recommending strongly that I visit. These were usually from their own region of origin. This has happened in every case of my discussing my thesis with Italians, particularly in rural areas. It conveys their pride and great enthusiasm for their local *feste* and traditions. Many people from outside of Italy, however, believe that the most unusual customs persist in the rural or mountainous areas of southern Italy or Sicily. (This may stem from the fact that in the Italian diaspora of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries millions of emigrants left the south of Italy, and thus in America or elsewhere in Italian immigrant communities people typically have idealised views of southern Italy.) Indeed there are many fascinating customs in the south and the cultural influences are very different, certainly. For example, the Greek civilisation left an enduring legacy in the south of Italy, in the regions which at one time made up *Magna Grecia*, which one does not find in the north. However, as this thesis will show, there are remarkable place-based events in the likewise diverse and fascinating north.

4.3.1 An Italian plethora of festivals

In one of the closing chapters of Machiavelli's renowned (and often reviled) classical theories on politics, *The Prince*, he exhorts the successful Prince to remember the essential nature of festivals.

...he should at suitable times of the year keep the people occupied with festivals and spectacles (Machiavelli, 1985: 91).

One guide to festivals in Italy suggests that it was always ‘considered an integral tool for managing the people’, and claims that the phrase used by the Bourbon rulers of Italy is well-known to Italians: ‘that the people have need above all of three things — festivals, flour and the gallows’ (Saffioti, 1997, 2009: 7). Whether due to this strategy of supplying *panem et circenses*, ‘Bread and Circus’, as used by many Roman Emperors; whether due to some imposition of the Church in order to ensure that Church holidays were observed (Turner, 1982: 35-36), whatever the reason, there is a staggering number of festivals, holidays and fairs in Italy. French academic Philippe Jouët has participated on at least two occasions in the academic conference that introduces Milan’s Celtic New Year festival each year. When we discussed my fieldwork on Italy’s festivals, he commented that he was struck by the notably larger number of cultural, religious and gastronomic festivals in Italy, in contrast with France. Jouët attributed this to the anti-clerical and anti-religion movements in nineteenth century France which caused many festivals to be abolished, particularly those perceived to have any Christian or religious basis (11 October 2008).

On the Internet in 2008-2009, sites specifically listing festivals in Italy gave divergent lists for these events. However, a sampling of the sites in Italian suggests that there could be thousands of *sagre* and *feste* each year in Italy. In Lombardy and Piedmont alone there could be anywhere from 100 to 500 or more in each region each year. For example, in Lombardy, one tourist guide edited and published annually lists eighty-four different Carnival celebrations throughout Lombardy for Lent in 2009 (Lozzi and Rossi, 2007). It is difficult to find a reliable source and reliable number. One tourism site dedicated to these cultural and religious festivals indicates that there may be over four hundred in Sicily alone. Thus in Italy, rather than asking ‘Why study festival?’, reasonably one can ask ‘Why *not* study festival?’ Each town, city or village has numerous annual festivals and fairs, some of which are

inarguably very old and — even if not ancient — are deeply symbolic manifestations of place-based traditions, demonstrating fervent loyalties. Tak writes in his introduction: ‘In Southern Italy festivals are important local public events. (...) Festivals are expressions of fierce localisms’ (2000: 11). Tak observed approximately thirty holidays celebrated in one year of his research in Cavello, Basilicata. His statements ring true not only in regards to southern Italy, but also to northern Italy. He mentions this himself, noting that the festival cycle has grown in Calvello in recent decades, and that ‘this phenomenon of expansion is widespread’ in Italy (2000: 11). Whether north or south, it would be akin to living with blinkers on to ignore the multi-textured cultural tapestry laid out for the observer in these myriad festivals.

4.3.2 Catholicism and economics as influences on festival

One part of the answer to the scholarly question of ‘Why are there so many festivals?’ must regard yet another aspect of Italian history and society, beyond territorial loyalties of *campanilismo* or the perpetuating of religious or agricultural commemorations. Festival culture in Italy may be more prevalent and longer-lived than other northern nations’, particularly those based in Protestant religions, due to the individual histories in Southern Europe. One may have to do with its Latin-style capitalism and the legacies of the Counter-reformation. The adherence to regional food traditions and gastronomic *campanilismo* are other factors that may also be intertwined with Catholicism. Another factor taken into account here are the theories on Southern Europe’s late or weak industrialisation (Sapelli, 1995: 13-15; 63-64).

Italian academic Diego Rinallo is a professor at the prestigious Bocconi University in Milan, Italy's respected international business school. (*Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi* was ranked seventh among international business programmes by Forbes magazine in 2003, and fifth in Europe by the Financial Times in 2008). In studying the differences of capitalist views in Italy Rinallo draws from Max Weber, pointing at the Protestant Reformation as one source of the difference in economic ethos and systems, between Catholic and Protestant cultures as well as between northern and southern Europe. Rinallo theorises that the accumulation of capital and other market principles were not instituted in similar ways — or at least were delayed greatly — in Catholic countries such as Ireland, Spain and Italy. One intriguing aspect to his theories is the assertion that Catholic theology's teaching of the innate dignity of man may have contributed to delaying the Industrial Revolution in those nations, through its promotion of the Biblical concept that man must rest from labour on the seventh day (as in Genesis in the Christian Bible). Rinallo attributes the survival and preponderance of *feste* to this belief: that the obligation of keeping the Sabbath, days of rest, of family time and honouring the saints through *festa* maintained the sacredness of these occasions (21 March 2009).

Turner likewise discussed this theory and its relation to Weber's writings when he distinguished between types of ritual and play, looking at the origins of leisure and of sabbath feast days (Turner, 1982: 35-39). Turner reminds readers of Weber's 'Protestant Ethic' and of English Puritanism's attacks on ritual, performance and all that was ceremonial.

English Puritanism affected not only religious worship by its attack on "ritualism", but also reduced "ceremonial" ("secular" ritual) to a minimum in many other fields of activity, including drama, which they stigmatized as "mummery" (38).

The delayed arrival of the Industrial Revolution in Italy is relevant here in various aspects, among them the survival of many agriculturally-oriented and land-based customs. This was discussed in Chapter two's literature review, and is also reviewed in the next chapters in regard to the specific regions studied here. Sapelli strongly suggests that Weber's 'capitalistic society... had little success in Southern Europe' (Sapelli, 1995:13) and that the theories put forth by various scholars on Southern Europe have much to say about the survival of rural customs in the cities. He demonstrates how the theories of ruralisation of the city and 'modernization without development' characterise Southern Europe (13). Crociani-Windland (2007) examines the survival of sharecropping in Tuscany and its impact on the festivals she studied there; likewise my research shows that this ancient form of land use impacts the relationship that Italians in the countryside have to land, place, and seasonal 'tides'. Leynse and Crociani-Windland both observe how French and Italian festivals strive to resist market forces and the pressure of globalisation.

These topics are not an over-riding focus for my thesis, as this is not an economics dissertation. However, having demonstrated my view of interconnectedness, as well as my espoused belief in the methodological value of hermeneutics coupled with heuristics, it is essential to take into account the economic history that has impacted Italy, its rural areas, cities, and its plethora of festivals. In addition, I am interested in themes of resistance — cultural, environmental, political and so forth — as are many theorists and participants in this study. Italy's festivals convey more complex and deep-seated messages than that which the casual observer may perceive, especially he or she who is unaware of the centuries of European history that the 'feast day' represents. Therefore, if one asks why a scholar would study festivals in Italy, the answer is more obvious now: because there are many, and because their qualities are rooted in uncommon artistic, sociological, political and philosophical

histories. These express not only history, but religion, folklore, and often also sense-related bonds with place.

4.3.3 'Ingesting topography' in France and Italy

Wendy Leynse used a descriptive term for her ethnography in France observing people, in essence, eating sense of place: 'Journeys through ingestible topography' (Leynse, 2006). She sees French children as being socialised into this awareness at a young age, a theory which is applicable to my observations about Italian food customs. She describes people with such acute gastronomic awareness of the geography of their food as 'situated eaters' (2006: 129), and observes how food festivals offer opportunities for learning a bioregion while relaxing.

Food-festivals are particularly suited to this task, as they often combine nostalgia for 'simpler' days with entertaining, convivial community gatherings (2006: 148).

She also makes pertinent points regarding the commercialisation that can occur at such festivals, capitalising on the 'nostalgia' people feel in the West for simpler foods and greater contact with food at its point of origin. Awareness and politicising of food production is a mode of consciousness which has grown in Italy as well, where the *sagra* has become a popular arena for these situated eaters' leisure times. Beyond the political aspects, as Leynse observes about France

The overall ambiance lends itself to an enjoyable performance and experience of a given locale, and is, thus, an excellent site for socialization of place-based food habits and an overall sense of place (Leynse, 2006: 148).

This statement applies equally to Italy.

Andrews (2008) has shown that festivals can preserve the local, and resist destructive market forces. We are all being impacted by these forces, and many of my participants referred to such economic themes throughout our interviews. Chapter six on Piedmont goes into the evolution of the *Slow Food* organisation, which grew out of the region studied here. *Slow Food* has created a philosophy and ethos of ‘slow living’, which founder Carlo Petrini and others involved in the organisation see as an antidote to the destructive patterns of post postmodern lifestyles (Andrews, 2008: 28, 41-42). Therefore, whether for the gastronomic awareness of place giving rise to embodied sense experiences of place through food, or due to the simple abundance of festivals, this section demonstrates some cogent rationales for an ethnographer choosing a study of festival in Italy.

4.3.4 Comparing festivals — how many and what?

A number of the scholars referenced in this thesis have studied festivals directly, such as Crociani-Windland, Derrett, Grimes, Pike, Tak. Two who theorise on similar themes to this thesis, such as festival’s relation to community wellbeing and sense of place are Crociani-Windland (2007) and Derrett (2003); they both also drew on four festivals. There does not seem to be a particularly cogent argument for using four examples; however, four geographic areas or four festivals offer sufficient examples for comparison and variety in data. It is not uncommon in scholarship that the study may in the end turn out to prove the initial thesis wrong, and that is all the more rationale for having a broader sampling. Tak (2000, 1990) has observed various festivals in two very different regions of Italy: Basilicata in the poorest areas of the south, and Tuscany, one of the richest and best known of the central region.

Therefore, in regards to the question posed at the head of this section, without a number above two or three, without variety in place, demographics or differing environments, in my opinion it would be difficult to gain the perspective that observing more festivals has offered.

4. 4. Supposed modernity, local networks and festival

Milan's history has been, like much of Italy's, not only a vast collection of magnificent artistic endeavours, but also tragically a long history of repeated invasion and of regular warfare. From the first waves of tribal people crossing down from the Alps to the first legions of armed Romans crossing up and over the plains south near the river Po, Milan's fertile flatlands have attracted every possible conqueror. Without having to seek ancient histories, the twentieth century alone has seen the horrors of war, as many of the works read and the interviews conducted emphasised. One of my fieldwork participants, elderly Laura Frassino, lived through the World War II bombings of Milan and gave personal accounts of the hardships and dangers they overcame as she and her husband tried to continue their lives, operating a small grocery store in the heart of Milan. The relevance of this point is to underscore, as will the fieldwork case studies, that sense of place does not necessarily evoke happy or positive memories and senses. Stewart in Feld and Basso's collection *Senses of Place* (1996) expresses this very well in her contribution on southern West Virginia, and 'the shock of history' that people had lived through (Stewart, 1996:145).

Italy, while being a 'first world' European nation, has shown earmarks and statistics that are similar in many ways to a developing country. Ginsborg's history of twentieth century Italy opens with a hard-hitting quote to set the stage immediately.

As one British officer commented at the end of 1943: 'Collectively they (the Italians) are to us a beaten people who live in squalor and have made a mess of their country, their administration and their lives' (Ginsborg, 2003: 1).

That is a harsh description indeed. Undeniably, the devastation of World War II left its mark in people's psyches. Contributor Martina Mela, anthropologist of the Alpine regions of Italy, laughed bitterly in our interview when asked about Milanese sense of place, saying that it was practically a bad joke (19 November 2007). As the country was, in Ginsborg's words, 'still predominantly a peasant country' in 1943 (2003:1), one realises that the lens needs to be set appropriately to understand attitudes and perspectives a mere sixty-five years later.

Although Milan is at the forefront of Italy's postmodern 'persona', Milan is still today, by many standards, a small city. For an important European centre it is surprising to note that the population is only approximately one million. The factories, restaurants and offices of Milan are staffed with those whose parents and grandparents were farmers, and perhaps were sharecroppers and peasant farmers (Crociani-Windland, 2007: 229-240; Marco from Mondovì, 9 November 2008; Laura Frassino, 17 February 2009). Sapelli was quoted in *Newsweek* magazine in 2008 describing Italy as 'postmodern without ever having been modern'. Italy is an example of a Western European nation that exemplifies Bruno Latour's thesis that 'we have never been modern' (1993). Latour's concepts of hybrids and of social networks (Latour, 1993:10-11; 117-120) are discussed in Chapter two's literature review. These theories are illustrated by many entrenched customs and traditions in Italy, such as chains of reciprocity. Sapelli has written widely on these and other customs in southern Europe's late evolution towards modernity, also reviewed in Chapter two. Some statistics help to paint the picture: Italy's population in 1951 was approximately 47 million, six years after World War II had ended and the reconstruction of the devastated country began. At that time there were 2.5 million sharecroppers, or roughly five percent of the whole population.

The internal migrations of rural people in numbers never seen before in the history of Italy changed large urban centres such as Milan radically (Sapelli, 1995: 44 – 45). He cites that ‘Between 1951 and 1971 4,000,000 people left the south of Italy: half of them settled in the north’ (Sapelli, 1995:45). With them came their country customs and their place-based traditions — to apply a Latour term, ‘the networks remained local’ (Latour, 1993:117-121). Sapelli describes the resilience of the local traditions even in the face of uprooting:

... Italian migrants tended to reproduce and strengthen the models of reciprocity and family ties on a local basis, in the cities where they settled. Summoned by the migratory chain of friends and relations, these models and ties became, from the moment of arrival to the moment of settlement, a strong and resistant cultural heritage. They were then grafted onto the city way of life with its modern consumer habits – the ‘affluent society’ (Sapelli, 1995: 44).

With these waves of migrants to the north came the traditions of the sacredness of home and of family, and of local food eaten in communal meals — represented by what Orsi calls the *domus* in his observations in New York City (Orsi, 2002: 75-79). Ginsborg believes this ‘attachment to the family has probably been a more constant and less evanescent element in Italian popular consciousness than any other’ (Ginsborg, 2003: 2).

As the foregoing from Sapelli demonstrates, with ruralisation of the cities newly constructed and organised festivals could maintain and preserve rural paradigms of behaviour and custom. Even those created for market purposes or perhaps political purposes (as in the case of Milan’s Celtic New Year, in Chapter five) can offer relational spaces that bring healing to the communities involved, combating the isolation and alienation typical of the postmodern urban or suburban world. Tak wrote of the restorative power of southern Italy’s festivals, showing how people come to the festival year in and year out ‘to refresh themselves at the well of local culture’ (Tak, 2000: 27). My work illustrates, as Orsi’s and Tak’s has done, how not only individuals but whole communities are renewed through the *festa*’s ‘reintegration’ (Orsi, 2002 : 172-173). Some Piedmont participants go so far as to see a kind of spiritual ‘absolution’

gained from the festival. Appropriate to my studies of masked festivals and street theatre in costume, Orsi states that the psycho-dramas of street theatre in the Harlem *festa* offered people a sense of healing and of reintegration (Orsi, 2002: 177). The following chapters illustrate the street theatre, communal feasting and ‘well of local culture’ (Tak, 2000) provided by the festivals examined in this thesis.

4.5 Milan — built sense of place and the city festival

Topophilia in Italy is often married with *campanilismo*, literally the love of one’s bell tower. This term is appropriate indeed in reference to Milan, where nowhere could there be a more dramatic architectural expression than the main cathedral, its *Duomo*. Lombardy’s largest city has no natural landmarks within the city, such as a river flowing through it, and although bordered on the north and west by the Alps, the mountains are obscured most days. Therefore the Milanese view their *Duomo* as though it were a natural landmark by which to orient themselves. They also use it as a central gathering place — an *agora* for the Greeks, a forum for the Romans, a *nemeton* for the Gauls and Celts. Like the small village with one main square for villagers to meet in, *Piazza Duomo* has been a similar kind of meeting place for Milanese to enjoy the company of one’s community, as has the nearby Castle *Sforzesco*, centrally involved in Chapter five. The famed Piazza and adjacent park area become central places for locals to put on their Sunday best and meet up, go for the daily walk, *la passeggiata*, and have a talk. (After three years of living in Milan, my family and I took these massive landmarks into ourselves and shared the Milanese identification with them as community meeting places, as well as markers by which to orient oneself.) These are also the central areas where city festivals take place.

Sapelli connects this importation of rural mores and habits to economic history in Italy, studying the impact of customs from the countryside as they were transported with the waves of migrants over decades in Italy's internal migrations.

In Greece, Turkey, Southern Italy, Portugal and Spain, internal migration from the rural areas to the cities gave rise to urbanization without industrialization, and this produced the ruralization of the cities. This meant that the old family-oriented models of behaviour were maintained (Sapelli, 1995: 118).

Although he specifically says *southern* Italy in this passage, Sapelli also discusses the millions who emigrated into the north from the south over decades (Sapelli, 1995:44; 46-48). My thesis argues that the 'old family-oriented models of behaviour' are maintained throughout Italy, in varying degrees due to education or economic status, even with industrialisation, and that 'ruralisation' of the cities has occurred throughout the country (Ginsborg, 2003: 1-3; Sapelli, 1994: 43). My fieldwork shows how the ingrained ethos of the network and of relationship is both maintained and created in the urban festivals in this thesis.



Figure 1 – Traditional masquers process through Verona, Veneto, northern Italy

4.6 Festivals of universal significance

A thesis on festival in Italy must discuss, even briefly, two of the most famous and historic traditions in Italy: the Carnival and the *palio*. The best-known Carnival celebration is the elaborately planned and performed month-long celebration in Venice, and the best-known *palio* are the likewise elaborate summer horse races in Siena. It can indeed be confusing, for festivals using the same name take place throughout Italy in myriad towns and cities.

The word *palio* actually means a prize given in a competition. It is used in Italy to mean various sorts of competitions or races, and applies to different varieties of festival. However, it is often used by foreigners in Italy to mean the famous horse races in July and August in Siena, Tuscany. (The uppercase name Carnival signifies the traditional winter events prior to

Lent, and likewise the *Palio* when capitalised often signifies Siena's internationally renowned horse race.) As an example, in Lombardy alone, there are thirty-one different events called *palio* throughout the spring and summer, some of which are races on mules or donkeys — a common style of *palio* competition. Others have nothing to do with animal racing, but are mediaeval re-enactments of historical battles, or royal events in the region. Some *palios* do involve races and have well-instated *contrade* in their cities or towns, who create the detailed historical re-enactments and competitions. One of the most elaborate and colourful in Lombardy is the *Palio* in Legnano, a small city in the area of Milan. The city has eight *contrade* and does involve a horse race; the city claims its *palio* can be traced back to the fourteenth century (Lozzi and Rossi, 2007: 74-75).

As mentioned above in this chapter, my estimate is that in 2007-2009 there were more than eighty different Carnival celebrations in Lombardy alone (Lozzi and Rossi, 2007: 267-268). (This is drawn from Italian tourism websites, from official guidebooks and from the tourism offices interviewed.) Some are larger and longer than others, some involve elaborate processions and parades with costumed, decorated floats, and some are more private affairs with parties in homes, clubs or schools. The photo below, Figure 2, shows a simple shop display in Omegna at Carnival time.

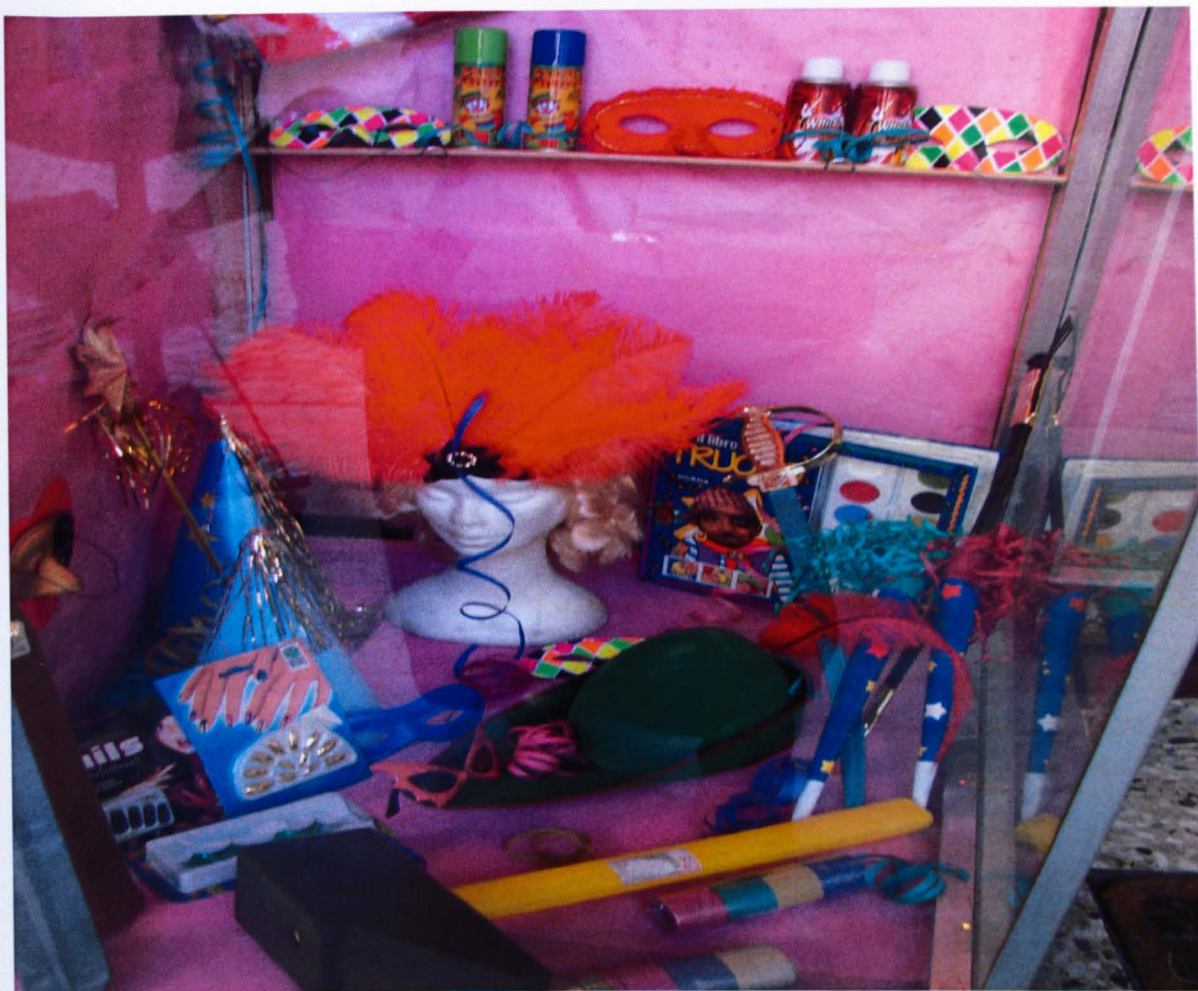


Figure 2 – Omegna shop window at Carnival season

One of the most elaborately organised in Lombardy is the Carnival in the city of Bagolino, *Bagoss* (its dialectal name), that prides itself on its well-known company of dancers, with traditional costuming and week-long festivities. The city upholds Rabelaisian customs in the rough and noisy street parties that take place as well as the more elegant dance company performances; as the Lombardy festival guidebook says: ‘To those in masks, in fact, all is conceded and all is forgiven’ (Lozzi and Rossi, 2007: 29). For my thesis fieldwork I observed the tamer, but distinctly place-based Carnival traditions in a small city in northern Piedmont, Omegna, which lasts only six or seven days. This is discussed in detail in Chapter six on Piedmont.



Figure 3 – Carnival parade and political float in Como, northern Lombardy

These two Italy-wide customs of Carnival and *palio* exemplify some of the principal themes of this thesis: how festivals perform (and honour) place, community and identity. The two also demonstrate human universals as seen in the theories on popular festive forms in Bakhtin (1984) and heterotopias in Foucault (1998, 2000). In the sections that follow we delve into some more specifics on these.

4.6.1 Some theories on the origins of Carnival

The word 'Carnival' has many theories as to its etymology, but the most common one encountered in my research is based on Catholicism's Lenten traditions of fasting and abstaining from meat: '*carne —vale*', or 'Meat farewell'. However, like Carnival's many traditions, the custom of fasting and abstaining from meat at this time of year may well predate Christianity (Gallo Pecca, 1987:17). The days of abstinence in preChristian times may have been longer than the forty days of Lent. Gallo Pecca writes, drawing from Roman Carnival scholar Filippo Clementi, that Lent was initially seventy days, starting from the beginning of February. Thus the traditions of winter festivities were well ingrained in the populace of the Italian peninsula already by the Middle Ages, with the heritage of Saturnalia and Lupercalia, so much so that even papal orders could not seem to eradicate them. Gallo Pecca writes that

In 1207 Pope Innocence III issued a decree which ordered an end to these blasphemous demonstrations; however it was not obeyed and the "Feast of Fools" continued for a long time, until 1400 when various Vatican Councils condemned them (1987:17).

The Feast of Fools was the traditional name for the *Festum fatuorum* – another form of Saturnalia (1987: 16) which was tolerated by the Church, and which Gallo Pecca places between Dec. 26th (or St. Stephen's Day), and Epiphany. In contrast, Bakhtin uses the term Feast of Fools for revelry at various times of year, Carnival as well as other times, when the traditional travesties and reversals of power and authority went on (Bakhtin, 1984: 220, 235). Gallo Pecca describes the *Episcopeilo* or *Episcopus puerorum*, the boy Bishop who would be chosen to play the role of Priest or Bishop, preach the sermon and even say Mass, a boy chosen from the choir perhaps. The boy Bishop would make fun of the priests and bishops, asking them searching or ridiculous questions (1987:16-17). The reversals common at this time of year have identifiable resonance in the fieldwork study of Andrista, Lombardy's *Badalisc* festival in Chapter five where a forest-dwelling serpent monster becomes a kind of

moral compass for the town. Whatever the actual origins of Italian Carnival, however old its pedigree, one can see remnants in these numerous related traditions that Bakhtin describes in his studies of universal carnival culture (1968, 1984). Bakhtin sees Carnival as maintaining other traditions that were dying out with the industrialisation and modernisation of the countryside; it became a 'reservoir into which obsolete genres were emptied' (Bakhtin, 1984: 218). Arguably the American custom of Hallowe'en has similar overtones — a time when the universals of popular revelry with masking, travesties, reversals, and even violence are thrown together.

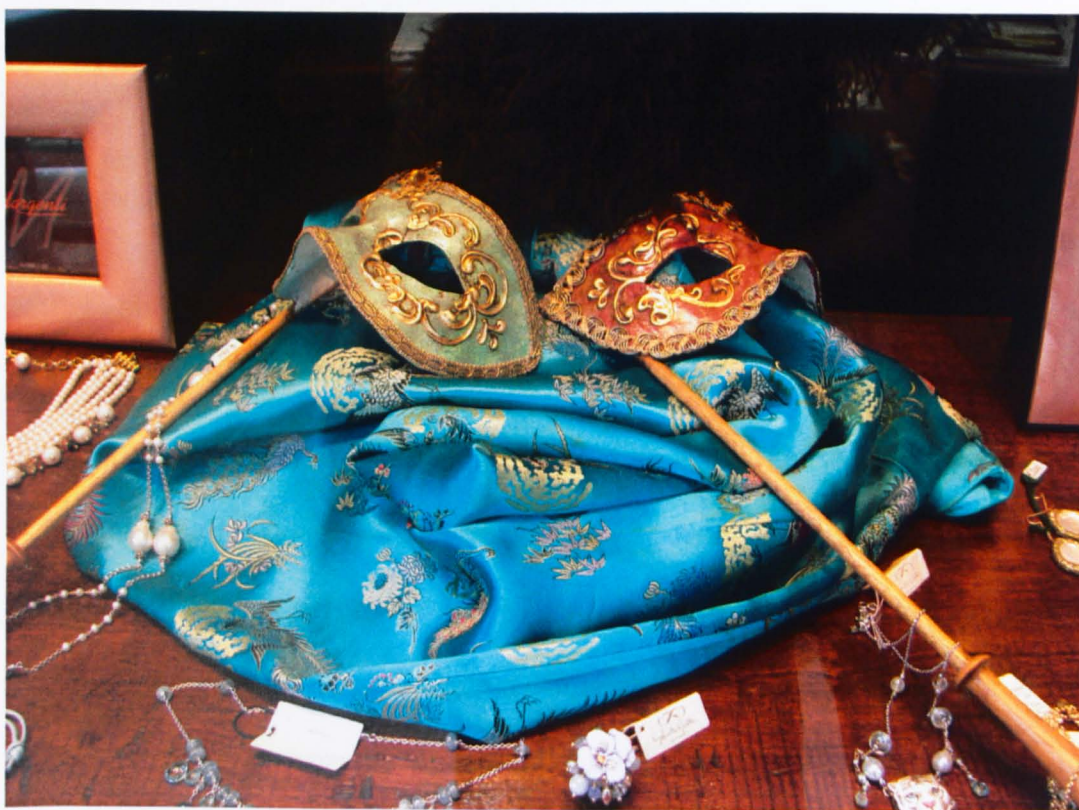


Figure 4 – Traditional Venetian Carnival masks on display in Milan shop window

4.6.2 Carnival masques

As shown above, the history and representation of Carnival and *palio* in general varies substantially from region to region. However, the masques are integral to Italian Carnival overall. There are masked characters that are specific to each region and yet which also often bear resemblance to Italian early theatre forms, the *Commedia dell'Arte*. The Italian work mentioned above by Gallo Pecca specifically studies Carnival customs in Piedmont. He describes how each town has its own traditional masques, specific to the place. Once again the interweaving of place and festival emerges in a nuanced materiality and performing of place, where —for example — the masques of Omegna are not the same as the masques of Asti or Biella, nearby Piedmontese cities within the same geographic region (Gallo Pecca, 1987: 19-25; 336). (This is true, and yet underscoring the universality of these archetypal celebrations, despite their difference some of the characters fall into similar categories: The Young Woman, The Young Man, The Crazy Woman, The Old Woman, and so forth.)

The extraordinary artistry and ornate beauty of Venetian masques has become synonymous with Carnival there. Many are universal, archetypal masques, such as Carlo Goldoni and other Italian playwrights used widely in creation of the stage characters of the theatre of the *Commedia dell'Arte*. While Goldoni was from Venice, and the masques are often associated with Venice, or with Venice's Carnival, they draw from diverse European roots and are used throughout Italy as they were throughout the *Commedia* theatre (Ferrone, 2006). The universality of mischievous Harlequin or sighing Pierrot, the pairs of lovers, the bumbling old man *Pantalone*, and so forth, over-rides restricting regionalisms as they touch shared human experience.

4.6.3 The *Palio* of Siena

The *Palio* of Siena is remarkable, (even in Italy with its many festivals), with its adrenalin-charged pageantry, profound place-based loyalties and symbolism. To give a better understanding of it, here are additional details to those already covered in Chapter two's literature review.

When I returned to live in Italy in 2006, after many years away, I had forgotten what I had learned regarding the many '*palios*' when previously studying here in the 1970's — i.e. that there are numerous '*palios*' of every sort throughout Italy. I was pleased to learn that the remarkable *Palio* of Siena still existed; I soon saw that throughout Italy there were also many more of various kinds, including new festivals of a similar sort being developed. Although I have not seen the Sienese *Palio* in person (yet), I have stood many times in Siena's main square, the *Piazza del Campo*, where the race takes place, listening to accounts of the race and seeing it in my mind's eye. Even in the televised viewing, it is clear that the event is extremely stirring, with massive throngs of people around the *Piazza del Campo*; the race is doubly exciting, for it is very dangerous and requires daring and control. For one thing, Siena is built on a hilltop, so the square is slanted; furthermore the riders are bareback, an additional challenge requiring skill and courage. It is significant to note that the horse may win the race without his or her jockey — a further testament to the power of the *contrada* identity, and the great respect given the racehorses. (This is discussed further below.)



Figure 5 – *Piazza del Campo*, Siena’s ancient heart

Among the four festivals that Crociani-Windland describes is the *Palio* of Siena. (Two of her studied festivals, the *Bravio* and the *Bruscello*, are discussed in Chapter two, section 2.14.)

Crociani-Windland’s research underscores the vibrant ‘interanimation’ (Basso, 1996: 55) with place and community that the *Palio* represents for the Siennese.

Three years of previous research into the *Palio* led me to conclude that a particular structure of identity based on a dynamic connectedness of land, body memory and identity is both discernible in this festival culture and fundamental to it (2007: 24).

Her words express the interconnected, placeful (Casey, 1996: 19) quality that makes Siena's *Palio* so striking. In autumn 2007 I had the privilege of an inside tour with a member of one of the *contrade*, the *Oca* or goose.



Figure 6 – Doorway decoration to headquarters of Siena's Goose *contrada*

The seventeen *contrade* can be described in many ways. They are neighbourhoods where the teams live, create their costumes, and have their ceremonies. As one might imagine, their loyalties and rivalries are intense and practically tribal (Drechsler, 2006:118). The geographic areas designating these neighbourhoods were established in 1729, and 'have remained constant to this day' (Parsons, 2004: 48). The *contrade* combine elements from mediaeval

guilds and from military organisations, maintaining such fervent loyalty that they are said to make up a kind of city-state unto themselves within the former city-state of Siena.

In Siena, it is now routinely said, each *contrada* is indeed like a city-state, exciting and inspiring a loyalty from its members that is comparable only to patriotism or to a deeply-felt sense of national identity (Parsons, 2004: 106).

One could spend a lifetime studying the symbolism that goes into each *Palio*, whether the ornately painted banners that each *contrada* preserves in its museum, their *drappelloni*, or the rituals and traditions that each *contrada* carries out. (Thanks to Gerald Parsons for personal clarification on the *drappelloni* traditions.) The place-based quality of the *Palio* is articulated well through the animals and other images that represent the *contrade*. Among the Nature-based symbols that define these communities inside the *Palio* are the goose, snail, panther, eagle, female wolf, owl, caterpillar, forest and wave.

Other earth-related elements exemplify and add to the potent placeful and senseful quality of this event. For example, *Piazza del Campo* can be translated as the ‘Square of the Field’. The fountain in the piazza is called *Fonte Gaia*, ‘Gaia’s Fountain’ or ‘Gaia’s Source’. This ancient, vibrant heart of the powerful city-state is the place where centuries of ritual — in addition to the *Palio* — have taken place. Parsons writes, ‘So central to Sienese civil life did the Campo become that it has even been argued that the history of the Campo is the history of Siena’ (2004: 23). As the race approaches, the piazza is filled with earth from the countryside, and this annual moment (as discussed in Chapter two, section 2.6), is felt profoundly by the Sienese as an auspicious and happy signal. Furthermore, in a Bakhtinian sense, the physicality of the event is heightened by the dangers already mentioned for horse and rider as well as by the surging masses of people: ‘This festive organisation of the crowd must be first of all concrete and sensual. Even the pressing throng, the physical contact of

bodies, acquires a certain meaning' (Bakhtin, 1984: 255). These are heterotopic universals of festival, across culture, time and across my study; Siena represents them in a particularly powerful combination in its fabled *Palio*. Parsons' work has been discussed in the literature review and among the details related are further aspects of the embodied earthiness of this *Palio*. Another element of Siena's sense of place connection highlighted by Parsons has remained a benchmark for my thesis in gauging place-connection:

...the purpose of all these activities is far from being anachronistic or backward-looking, nor are they for the benefit of tourists, however much modern tourists may be charmed or fascinated by them. On the contrary, these are profoundly contemporary rituals; and they are the rituals of a city and of a people who perform them for themselves and their own purposes and who would do so whether tourists were present or not (2004:159).

These foregoing sections have articulated cross-cultural universals of festival and have demonstrated some cogent purposes for the study of festival. Now we turn to the specific questions posed by the thesis.

4.7 Liminality and the bridge to place awareness

Of the five events observed 'officially', from the pilot studies in 2007-2008 and subsequent field work in 2008-2009, it is clear that some festivals are more theatrical and ritualised more elaborately than others. Some of these involve traditional costumes, or costumes and masks; some do not. In the case of Paroldo, in southern Piedmont, no elaborate costuming is involved, but an antiquated style of dress is often worn voluntarily by participants, including long black cloaks. These signal local heritage, awareness of local traditions and support of the village's history brought back by some village nonprofit organisations. Some of that same tradition of dressing in costuming and in cloaks is reflected in Milan's Celtic New Year, as the following chapters discuss. However, whether elaborately ritualised or not, whether expressed in costuming or not, as Grimes points out, there is embodiment, even in the most

‘ordinary’ of ritualisation (2006: 35). Bonds with place and loyalty to home can be perceived in the simplest of forms, which may in fact express the most authentic embodiment and materiality, as there is less commodification.

Michael Gardiner in *Theory and Society* speculated that the festival can become an example of Bookchin's form of ‘eco-community’.

The carnival community breaks down artificial barriers between people, and between humanity and nature. It revels in diversity; it celebrates spontaneity, play and bodily pleasures, but without abandoning reason...(Gardiner, 1993: 792).

In this article Gardiner postulates ways in which carnival culture, festival culture and the occasional *communitas* experiences (Turner, 1982: 44-51) can arise, opening or building a bridge uniting humanity and nature. The exteriorisation of symbols and of paradigms, the performance of place, through the festival enactments and performances offer a form of embodiment of place; therefore, these are means through which humanity can live their bonds with place more deeply, as the section below describes. Along with this concept is another, also discussed by Turner and other theorists on ritual: the concept of liminality. It is an important key to the bridge to sense of place.

Liminality is a central concept to this discussion of festival's engagement with place, and is an essential component in the Scale of Engagement used for the final analysis. It has been discussed in Chapter two regarding Turner's ideas. However, some further unpacking of the term's use in this thesis is called for. As Chapter two states, this thesis admittedly conflates Turner's categories and uses liminal — not Turner's distinction of the liminoid — in my festival and ritual observations. My use of the term liminal is drawn from the vernacular sense, from the psychological and religious meanings, rather than from Turner's more specific

usage. In discussing the liminal experience my meaning indicates an experience of time which is different from the everyday, mundane world's, and where we have 'crossed a threshold' to a different perception of the world around us. In Tak's view,

Rituals create a situation which has been called "time out of time" or "liminal". It is a situation circumscribed in time and place in which the relations become different from those in everyday life... (Tak, 2000: 13).

In this ontology liminality is itself a state of being and of awareness —it is not merely the opening or first steps to that new awareness. The change in relations that Tak refers to above in my view applies to our relationality with place, as well as humanity. The term can have spiritual implications, indicating that when liminal experiences and spaces emerge, we may experience something more-than-human, something greater or vaster or unitive —something numinous.

Before leaving this discussion of liminality, a brief discussion of the concept of *numen* is warranted. As mentioned in Chapter one, *numen* is a term used across academic disciplines, with varied nuances. The original sense of *numen* was in classical times the spirit or deity that protected a certain place, its *genius loci*. Today's meaning of numinous refers to that which brings a kind of supernatural, mystical, more-than-human feeling. Some theorists conjecture that *numen* and *genius loci* are the origins to today's term sense of place (Jackson, 1994: 157-158; also cited in DeMiglio and Williams, 2008: 16). However, the two should not be used interchangeably, as noted in earlier chapters. My thesis offers both theory and fieldwork examples of how festivals may at times create a liminal space for awareness to arise in the festival participants —an unusual, out of the ordinary sense of the Other; this at certain times can be said to be numinous. This awareness may have to do with many qualities associated with rituals, with an otherworldly ambiance created by a festival; it also can have to do with

the quality, the innate essence of a place. In those moments the bridge uniting humanity and Nature becomes more tangible and notable.

4.8 Embodiment and exteriorisation

The sections above have discussed in some detail already some of the traditions regarding masks, costumes and the use of cloaks in Italian festivals. Now this section returns to some theories on this creative form. In his early article on masking (1975), Ronald Grimes looks at four possible interpretations of ‘masking’ where he delineates ‘a phenomenology of exteriorization’: ‘concretion, concealment, embodiment and expression’ (1975: 508). To venture a further step, this thesis theorises that not only the mask or costume, but also the festival itself, all become part of a phenomenology of exteriorisation. My work makes the case that the human experience that is ‘exteriorised’ is sense of place.

Grimes’ categorisation of embodiment expresses the celebrations of community and place made real and tangible in the festivals observed. As Grimes discusses, ‘the dancer appears to have tapped into inner power’ and thus embodies the truth of his mask (515). The participants in my fieldwork, in some cases have clearly ‘tapped into’ the truth of the place. Their costumes exteriorise the locals’ sense of and bond with the place – not through exact historical representation, but through symbolism. They in essence become archetypes or metaphors for the place itself. This echoes a concept that Gardiner cites: ‘Carnival itself was often personified as “nature”’ (Burke, 1978 cited in Gardiner, 1993:771). The fieldwork chapters following this demonstrate how in some of the festivals observed, Nature is personified and embodied.

Watson writes on his theories of performing place (2003) that:

...a focus on embodied practices through which people engage with the materiality of a site gives a means of transcending the dichotomy of nature and culture as it can be applied, in different formulations, to our understanding of place (2003: 148).

Watson articulates here a clear illustration of the bridge that the embodied practices of community festival or community ritual create between humanity and place. In this sense, these festival embodiments speak to the power of the place and its agency: the place shows itself to us through the festival forms.

4.8.1 Ritual as festival, festival as ritual

The embodiment of place and engagement with place through food and eating are even more potent when done in an annual, ceremonial manner. For example, the imagery of the food cooked literally on the lake at the festivals in Omegna adds to the placeful symbolism there. To further enhance this ritualised sense of food, communal eating becomes sacred in some of the participants' points of view. Tak calls the foods offered by the community in more established Church-oriented festivals, *cibi rituali* — ritual foods (2000: 102, 108). In Italy, a Catholic country, where food plays a potent social and symbolic role, the correlation between sharing food ritually and Catholic communion at Mass is easy to imagine. Orsi gives many examples of food's power in relation to home, the sacred *domus*, as part of community festival in his study of Italian-Americans in New York City's Harlem (2002). Chapter two discussed Bettinelli's observations on the profound sense of place in Italian folk singer Guccini's music; she makes the religious relationship to foodstuffs very clear by using the terms 'transmutation' and 'alchemy', while seeing symbolism in the bread flour being milled as

‘resurrection’ and ‘communion’ (Bettinelli, 2002: 107-108). Chapter six on Piedmont looks further at perspectives on food in Italy and its perceived ‘redeeming power’.

Grimes in his 2006 work makes the repeated distinction and observation that ritual happens anywhere and everywhere. He seems to bristle at the idea that rituals only take place in ‘sacred places’ or hallowed halls or landscapes, and points out that rituals and ritualising often take place in very ordinary places and times, as much as we late modern cultures might like to deny it or squash it.

For most scholars the gods lurk in the details; for ritual studies scholars, sometimes in quite ordinary details. (...) One of the great difficulties in studying ritual is that participants, as well as scholars, miss the utter ordinariness that suffuses rites, even those that are formal and elevated (Grimes, 2006: 89).

Some of the festivals in this study demonstrate this ‘utter ordinariness’. Such mundane quality does not diminish the power of the ritual meals, or for this thesis’ purposes, damage the potential for engaging with place by the participants. It is other factors that would dispel the deeper sense of place, or cut the connection across the divide, the newly constructed bridge of ritual and festival, allowing it to drop into a human/Nature abyss. Factors such as insensitive tourism and commercialism, the case of drawing grossly exaggerated numbers of visitors who have no clear understanding of what the event expresses. It is obviously a delicate balance that the festivals will always have to hold and walk in order to keep authenticity and a true sense of place, while still developing the numbers of participants that rapidly de-populating rural areas ideally desire.

An annual community festival is — in a ‘Grimesian’ sense — always a ritual, but a ritual is not always a festival. There are rituals or festivals which express sense of place, that offer

poetics of place more distinctly or consciously than others. The delicate moment of crossing the human-Nature gulf can even occur in an urbanised setting like central Milan. My fieldwork has shown that it does so, as the final analyses in Chapter seven illustrate. The chapters to follow demonstrate how some of the festivals observed in this fieldwork create liminal space and time in the heterotopia of the festival, due to the qualities of the individual events themselves, as well as the specific agency of place, the place-power.

4.9 Conclusion

Sense of place is studied by scholars across disciplines as a means to health and well-being, individually and in communities (DeMiglio and Williams, 2008; Derrett, 2003; Eyles and Williams, 2008; Hild, 2006, *inter alia*). Community festival is a vibrant means of accessing, reinforcing and promoting such performative genres. The heterotopic and heterochronic (Foucault, 1996) time out of ordinary time offered by annual community rituals offers possibilities for phenomenologies of exteriorisation in all senses. These deliver permission to postmodern society to move into states of mind allowing other knowledge — or perhaps, Other knowledge — to slip through. This is one remarkable gift of festival that can easily be overlooked in the quest for commercial return or development in a town or region.

This chapter offered examples elucidating the reasoning and choice of key themes for this thesis, such as:

- why one may choose to study festivals,
- why to study them in Italy, and
- why in relation to sense of place.

The next two chapters further these arguments through thick description accounts from the fieldwork in northern Italy. These are related to the theories and themes of place, community, identity and embodiment (through food and other experiences) which have been explored here.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMMUNITY, TRADITION AND FESTIVALS IN LOMBARDY

Part One

We 'montanari' here, mountain people, we have a huge sense of place (Mario Castoro, Cevo fieldwork participant, 5th January 2008).

Milan is a city where instead of stars you have words... words in Piazza Duomo... where people talk to each other (Valeria Morgana, Milan fieldwork participant, 18 October 2008).

5.0 Sense of place, relationship and identity in Lombardy

This chapter discusses two areas of Lombardy, the city of Milan and a tiny village called Andrista. It discusses concepts related to sense of place as demonstrated through the Lombardy fieldwork, and introduces a new element to the thesis' primary themes: identity. One case study, that of Andrista, shows that a possible source of the potent local identity may lie in preChristian rock carvings in the area. This chapter's fieldwork also reveals certain aspects of civic and civil religion as they emerge through Italian festival. It explores other concepts such as the nuanced experience of the Other and related theories of awareness that arise through the heterotopia of the festival (Foucault, 1998: 182-183; Rodman, 2003: 211-212). The chapter illustrates how communities can reveal their bonds with place through carnivalesque exteriorisation of place embodied in performance, costume and mask.

The review of fieldwork case studies begins alphabetically, and with the highest and smallest town in my study.

5. 1 The annual festival of the *Badalisc*

If you were born and raised in Andrista, a tiny Alpine village, in the far north of Lombardy, on the night of January 5th you will remember that your fellow townspeople are donning costumes, cooking traditional recipes, lighting torches and going in search of a large serpent figure. No matter where you are or who you are, your heart will be turning towards home — or so my participants claimed.



Figure 7 - Andrista community hall and festival sign

One of my principal informants on the *festa del Badalisc* is Patrizia Murana, who is a fundamental part of the *festa*'s organisation. Patrizia is an out-going mother and wife, as well as well as a government employee; additionally she is the sister of one of the men who has played a major role in the ritualised street theatre of the *Badalisc*'s speech, for some six years or more. She says of people's commitment to returning to the festival:

No matter what, the 5th of January, (people) try to be in Andrista. They keep other commitments and bonds with the town, such as the festivals at the end of July (the patroness Madonna) or in November for the Day of the Dead when we go to the cemetery. These are times for coming home. We have young couples who have moved away, but they come back on the 5th of January, with their children, sometimes travelling miles and miles, to be at the Festival of the *Badalisc* (5 January 2008).

However, if you are in town and have fallen afoul of some other participants — particularly those involved with the writing of the *Badalisc*'s speech — you may be dreading what comes next that night.

The first year my family and I made the trek up through the snowy valley to attend the festival, as the road turned to climb upwards towards the impressive peak of *l'Adamello*, (under which tiny Andrista hangs), we suddenly realised that bonfires dotted the hillsides. The fires were easily visible on the valley floor miles below and amidst our surprise we laughed at first, saying that they were getting fires ready to roast the beast after the hunting party. We actually had no idea of how ancient-seeming and liminal a space we were about to enter— nor that the bonfires were in fact connected with the festival. As we approached the tiny village, the snow thickened and the darkness as well; it became clear that the bonfires were being set by villagers in barnyards and farmers' fields. Although we had not yet arrived at the festival, it was already apparent that this was not a large, institutionalised event, but rather a very small, traditional one. From the outset we had the sense that we were entering into a hidden, ancient custom in the dark, high mountains.

There was no place to stay in the hamlet of Andrista, where the festival was being prepared, and so we continued past it up the mountain to the next village, Cevo. At our inn, literally in the last and highest corner of town before the mountain preserve, the innkeeper asked if we were there for the festival. People in the cafe near the entrance seemed to stop talking to listen

to our answer. This was Mario Castoro, longtime resident of the area and native of the area; he later gave two interviews contributing helpful background on the traditions. We had a chat and hot drink, preparing ourselves for the snowy trek back down the mountain to Andrista. When I asked about sense of place in the area, as cited at the head of this chapter, Mario stated proudly, ‘We “*montanari*” here, mountain people, we have a huge sense of place’ (5th January 2008). He went on to describe how people in other valleys, if asked where they come from, will say the name of the valley. However, he claimed that within Valcamonica itself when asked people will always give the name of their town or village. Mario related this awareness and bond with place to the fact that their dialects are very distinctive from one village to another — so much so that they literally do not understand one another from one town to another. He used an expression that captured some of this regional identity and Sense of place: ‘The dialect brings its history from very ancient roots. It’s literally a paradigm unto itself that the dialect expresses, which contains the history of a place.’ (5 January 2008).

As another example he spoke of Cevo’s own local masque, giving a succinct portrayal of embodiment and cultural identification where *campanilismo* and Sense of place merged in interesting forms. Cevo is only five kilometres away from Andrista, yet Mario claimed to have never been to the *Badalisc* festival. (This is despite the fact that his wife works closely with Patrizia in Cevo in the local government offices.) In speaking of Cevo’s ‘*Basilisc*’, which appears at Carnival season, he made an astute observation of their masque’s silent materiality and embodiment of place.

Our masque is a big goat, rather than a serpent. While theirs walks, our leaps, cavorts around and jumps. While the *Badalisc* in Andrista talks and gives this collection of gossip from all the community, ours remains silent. People can look into their own hearts and see if their behaviour has been good or bad. Theirs talks and talks, but ours is silent. It’s more in symphony and in keeping both with the mountains and with mountain people’s culture, which is very silent (5 January 2009).

When we asked about the snow falling that night, Mario gave further authenticity to his regional awareness and sense of place. He remarked sadly that it was ‘rotten snow’ these years — not the kind that used to fall in decades past. Its wet texture had prevented the development of ski facilities in the area, which as the owner of an inn he seemed disappointed by. Mario predicted that the snow wouldn’t settle. In fact, we saw the next day that the snow did have a strange quality to it, dripping off the trees in unusual patterns. We ended the interview, finished our tea and Mario drew a little map to show us the way down to Andrista.

The *Badalisc* reappears

The woods were dark and ominous-seeming as the fog and mist obscured the way; it seemed a good night indeed for an ancient winter rite. It also seemed a good night for warming ‘comfort food’ like the festival’s promised polenta and stew. The festival organiser in the hamlet below, Patrizia, had given me her mobile number and thus we had planned our meeting point for after the monster’s capture and speech. At the community centre in the middle of the tiny hamlet, next to the churchyard, a hardy crowd was waiting, stomping its feet and blowing, watching for the monster’s capture and speech. Groups began to file into the back alleys of the village, and so we followed along. People were excitedly talking in dialect and Italian, some children in costumes and some people peering out their warmly lit windows. The street theatre that began to unfold was strikingly ritualised, and liminal space enveloped the wintry Alpine night quickly as the hunt began. There were characters dressed in specific costumes that *must* be part of the ritual — the townsfolk described them as being *de rigueur*. Holding torches, the costumed figures cry out for the monster as they climb the mountainside. Until very recently no women were even allowed to view the hunt; it is still a strict policy that no women may ever play the roles in the theatrical ritual. The list of masked

characters are: The Old Woman or Grandma (*Nonna* or *La Vecchietta*), The Young Woman (*La Signorina*), The Old Man or Grandpa (*Nonno* or *Il Vecchietto*) and finally the figure who purifies the way for the *Badalisc*, sweeping the cobblestones with a huge, old fashioned broom. Patrizia volunteered in one interview that the first part of the monster's hunt and capture is 'a purification rite'. By extension one may say that the whole village is purified at the festival ritual.

Thus, from time immemorial (as my participants told me — the Italian expression that they used was 'it goes back into the night of time') each January 5th, after the ritualised hunt and procession, the *Badalisc* unveils the foibles, peccadilloes and the adventures of Andrista's townspeople in a speech for all to hear. The speech is read by his handler, the masked character known as the Old Man or the Grandfather. Traditionally it is written and read out in the local dialect, which they claim is unintelligible even to those who are natives of areas five to ten kilometres away, as Mario had said in our interview. For this reason, in 2009 they began to alternate years when the speech is in dialect and when in Italian. This was obviously a sign that the organisers are hoping for more outside visitors and a wider audience. Salvatore Rospo, an interview participant, mentioned that there was dissension in the village over the decision to give the speech in Italian, instead of in dialect.

On my first visit in 2008 I waited in the street while the procession began to come down into the village, past the Church. There were probably thirty or forty people outside, waiting for the procession, and more stood near to the community centre, across the street. Leading the way into the village were the masques sweeping the streets, calling out something in dialect. Behind them came the Beast, with glowing eyes and waving head, sadly subjecting his bulk to

be chained and led along like a great dog by characters holding torches. Children scampered in front of him, both frightened and delighted. Adults took pictures walking along with the group and also leaning out of the ancient village houses. There was a jolt, a *frisson*, of excitement, of danger and of strangeness at seeing these masques in a concentrated, altered state, loudly carrying out the Alpine rite in the frigid January night. As true outsiders who did not speak the local dialect at all, nor know the local customs, and who were the only foreigners in evidence, it was a sense of having strayed into a cultural inner sanctum.

On my second festival visit in 2009, giving validation to my assertion that Andrista's festival exemplifies the theories of heterotopia and its liminality, a true feeling of danger did arise during the hunt: danger and the 'jolt' of drama or crisis are universals of festival and ritual (Gardiner, 1993; Turner, 1982), as they are of the heterotopia (Foucault, 1998: 179-182). That night I followed the hunting party masques up the mountainside, and suddenly found myself separated from my travelling companion, alone in a snowy field with one of the black-cloaked men. It shocked me when he seemed purposely to throw his torch at me. (The fire danger was slight — it went out immediately on the snowy ground.) My companion was female and American as well, so perhaps our presence was a double intrusion: women and foreigners. His costume was a threatening one, thus the *Badalisc* street theatre instilled hints of danger; he had embodied his character well, playing a threatening role. The liminality of the hunt is heightened by this jump into non-ordinary time, into the heterotopia. I spoke to him in Italian, with humour, and he later apologised. Nonetheless, his act appeared symbolic, if not directly representative of the fact that only very recently had women been permitted to attend this part of the ritual. Hearing the guttural cries of the men hunting the monster by torchlight on the mountainside, scrambling up and down the trails, all added to the liminal quality of the event. The mysterious polychronic ambiance of the night was enhanced by the sounds from

horns and conch shells that the men from neighbouring villages were blowing as they accompanied the hunters.



Figure 8 - The *Badalisc* speaks, along with requisite masked male companions

The speech and the monster's party

The monster's speech in 2008 was in dialect, and therefore we did not know what all the crowd were laughing and hooting at. It was apparent that there was a particular oratorical cadence to the delivery, and that the content had an impact on the locals listening. The body language of those listening was expressive. After the speech all filed into the community centre, where a party was getting ready — a band of musicians, and a café selling the festival

foods. There were about seventy-five to one hundred or so people in the two rooms of the newly built centre, in both years that I observed. My sense is that in 2009 more people attended as the weather was cold, but not actively snowing.

People were obviously curious about who we were and why we were there; however, unlike the second year I attended, in 2008 no one came up to ask questions or to introduce themselves. Seeing people with ruddy faces and relaxed mountain clothing laughing and talking, old people sitting down to watch the couples and children dancing, or gathering to eat, was again a sense of seeing an authentic Alpine tradition in full swing. There was no commercialisation of the festival, only a few posters and local foods named for the *Badalisc*. Unlike Paroldo or Omegna (or other festivals I attended, not in this study), there were no long tables for communal dining. People ate on their laps at the side of the dance floor, or at small tables with individual families. One of the customs that people were engaged in signalled that the *Badalisc* was like an important visiting personage, perhaps like a family member not often seen: children would go up to the costume which had been set in the corner and have their pictures taken with it. It was reminiscent, as is the role that the monster plays in the village, of a kind of Santa Claus figure who appears once a year. (The photo in Figure 11 shows him ‘at rest’.) It is useful to recall that in this remote part of northern Italy there are no McDonald’s fast food restaurants, and no other chain or theme restaurants where children may encounter a life-size costumed figure; it is unlikely that children from this area of the Alps go to Disneyland or Disney World to meet Mickey Mouse et al. Therefore in their life world, the *Badalisc* and other traditional masques are both symbolic and significant in their childhoods. As sections further on in the chapter will discuss, the *Badalisc*’s symbolism of place and identification with place are deeper and more ancient than one initially may realise.

As the evening wore on, the dinner and dancing began to heat up, residents glowing from the spiced wine, and their enjoyment of the traditional sausages and polenta of the *Badalisc*. The recently-built community centre provided a comfortable hilltop space for the village to gather and celebrate on a snowy night — or on a hot afternoon, as the festival of their Patroness Madonna in July would be. Adding to my sense of being part of the elite inner circles of the community, in 2008 Patrizia invited us to her home. It was just up the hill, past the trail of the *Badalisc*'s arrival. She had us do our formal interview there, and gave generously of her time — despite being one of the organisers of the festival for whom this was, no doubt, a big night. While we spoke, her brother came in, still in his make up and costume as one of the monster's 'handlers'. As sections below detail, she and her brother are very concerned that outsiders want to dilute the traditions by mixing them with other towns' and cities' festivals, or by combining the *Badalisc* with other masques in differing calendrical events such as Carnival. Patrizia grew rather exercised in these discussions, both that first night in her home, and also later when I visited on other research trips. The passion with which she and her small community are safeguarding their customs is intriguing, as well as admirable. The sections below pose various theories for why this may be the case in Andrista.

5.2 Memory, identity and embodiment

As Patrizia, her brother Marco, Salvatore and others in the hamlet portrayed to me in various interviews, the world of Andrista's residents is interwoven with the *Badalisc* monster. He is a symbolic, costumed *Genius loci* who not only represents Andrista's ancient past, but embodies it. In my second visit to the festival at Epiphany in 2009, people seemed warmer and more open, introducing me here and there. (I was with a woman friend, and not my

husband; that may, given the lingering Italian mores about ‘unattached’ women, have had some influence.) Consequently through a series of conversations, upon hearing about my study, some friendly local people led me through the party, practically by hand, to meet people they said ‘could truly tell me about sense of place and the mountains’. They introduced me to a family of local farmers and shepherdesses, including two sisters, in their late twenties or early thirties, Elena and Anna Mandorla. Elena and Anna were weathered, though young, wiry people with slim frames and warm, dark eyes. Their little niece was a small replica of them, as their mother was an elderly version. They spoke with moving eloquence — not in dialect, but in proper Italian — of the *Badalisc*’s exteriorisation of place through the masque.

The *Badalisc* is a symbol of the land and is a connection to Nature. He is the Man/Animal. He comes from the land and is captured by peasants, so it’s all from Nature. As far as sense of place, well, if the *Badalisc* were missing, the festival would have no meaning. The party and the dinner aren’t anything special - it’s the symbolism that makes it special and that gives it meaning. The *Badalisc* makes it! He gives it all the sense of place (5 January 2009).

The sisters talked with me more, and then invited me to their farm the next day. I found this experience moving, as they seemed to not only understand sense of place deeply, but somehow to embody it themselves. I gave them my mobile phone number and took theirs. I did visit their farm the next day, and it was a most striking and memorable experience. The family’s memories of the festival, of the mountains and of the passage of time there were deeply intertwined with Nature and with their animals. Somehow they came to symbolise the true heart of the *Badalisc* for me. We have remained in touch.



Figure 9 - Mandorla family children playing in the barns at the family farm

There is a sensual, physical relationship with all that the *Badalisc* festival represents for its townspeople, through specific foods, costumes, sounds, traditions. Once upon a time, the flour for the *Badalisc*'s traditional polenta was gathered door to door by the village children – giving deep symbolism to the physical sharing and community bonding. (Patrizia said, as did another participant, that contemporary hygiene concerns have made it so that communally gathered polenta flour is not used in the meal anymore.) Elena and Anna aptly captured this with their comments. Like the Madonna for Harlem, as Orsi describes: ‘...the *festa* and the *domus*, the sense world, was shaped and presided over by a powerful woman’ (2002:172).

For Patrizia and others, the *Badalisc* is alive, an integral part of their woods, mountains and community all year long.

5.3 Epiphany's moralising monster

Despite the earthy physicality and embodied materiality of the *Badalisc*, there is a morality element to the *Badalisc*'s presence. The qualities he represents are both transcendent and immanent to villagers and participants. Salvatore Rospo, a long-time festival participant and now a cook at the festival, described the *Badalisc*'s speech this way:

The *Badalisc* stays in the woods all year, taking note of all that happens during the year. He gathers the notable things – the betrayals, the disagreements, everything - and he tells the town about them. Without using surnames, of course! He's not a god, but he does open up the doors to show what loyalty really is, what sincerity is. He allows people to have the courage to recognise they did wrong and to try to make it right with those they have offended (5 January 2009).

According to Patrizia and Salvatore people in the village warn each other when someone says or does something surpassing conventional bounds in the little village, reminding them to be careful because the *Badalisc* will hear or see. In this sense the *Badalisc* plays the part of moral compass for Andrista. Salvatore added more of his views in our second interview.

Once upon a time, long ago in “the night of time”, the ritual was carried out to propitiate the “forces that be”, to keep the village safe and bring fertile harvests in the year to come. Now there are no true peasant farmers any more, really, and the festival is very different from even my childhood and my parents' time. However, people come back for the festival every year to keep the sense of unity. It's good for the community, it's healthy (3 March 2009).

As Orsi recounts, the Madonna plays a similar role during the Harlem July *festa*.

The religious experience of July 16 had the power to evoke memories that were extraordinarily basic: the people seemed to be returning not only to their paese, but more profoundly, to their mothers. The devotion summoned the people into the sacral domus and surrounded them with the familiar tastes, smells, sounds, colors and textures; in this way, in the presence of their “mamma”, the people returned to the world in which they had first learned, from their mothers, what reality was, what was good and what bad, what their basic values were, and the values of their community. The *festa* and the long-passed (sic) intimate moments of moral foundation smelled, tasted and sounded the same (Orsi, 2002: 172).

It is interesting to note that the Patroness of Andrista is the same aspect of the Madonna as Orsi studied in Harlem, the Madonna of Mount Carmel, also celebrated in July. The materiality and relationality integral to my theories on festival and sense of place are related to Orsi's assertions of the role played by 'sense memory' in the Harlem festival's sensual identification with place, social context and with morality.

When we consider what was taking place at the *fiesta* – the integration of young people into the traditional values, the communal reaffirmation of these values, the establishment of the nexus between individual and family, family and community, and so on (...) we can see that the creation of this sense world as the environment in which all this occurred was an effort to structure a very basic point of orientation. (...) The food, noise, smells all established the necessary precondition for the absolution, resituation and reintegration that took place at the *fiesta* (Orsi, 2002: 172).

In the discussions of other festivals in this fieldwork, in both Lombardy and Piedmont, we will see how those festivals have no *explicit* relationship to the re-assertion of traditional mores or familial values (although some organisers do express value-laden views about their motivations for the festival in interviews). While the tiny community's festival in Andrista does in essence re-assert traditional mores, alternatively the festival in Milan discussed later in this chapter allows a space for non-traditional identities and values to emerge.

Nonetheless, whether in a small village or in a large urban centre, a consistent theme in these festivals is the reintegration and reaffirmation of certain shared values through the community rediscovery and re-enacting of its bonds.

Patrizia was clear that the monster must remain part of Epiphany. From an etic view it would be easy to interpret the *Badalisc* figure and his group of requisite masques as either an early Carnival representation, or a traditional form carried over from winter merriment such as Saturnalia. Carnavalesque reversal traditions appear evident in the figure of a wild serpent monster giving the town a lesson in morality — a Bakhtinian reversal (Bakhtin, 1984: 198; 219). Whenever an Italian audience hears my fieldwork story, they predictably interject: '...

and then they kill him!’ as the end of the story nears. The uncrowning, debasement and thrashing model that Bakhtin describes in his renowned study of Rabelais, of medieval/Renaissance carnivalesque traditions and of folk laughter, are ingrained in the Italian psyche. Nevertheless, taking the emic perspective, Patrizia adamantly denied any connection with the pre-Lenten Carnival. She told a story of how the townsfolk were invited once to participate in a Carnival parade in the nearby valley, in a much larger resort town about fifty kilometres away, Darfo Boario Terme.

One must remember that ours is not at Carnival time. It’s a winter tradition. One year they asked us to be part of the big Carnival parade and celebration at Darfo Boario Terme. We weren’t at all sure we should go, but we decided to go that year. However, we stipulated that there were conditions for our participation: the *Badalisc* was not to be on a float with other costumes or traditional Carnival masques – no *Pulcinella* or *Arlecchino* were to be with him! He is a costume and masque from the mountains of Lombardy, yes – but NOT a Carnival masque. He had to be alone with his usual companions, the Old Lady, the Old Man, The Young Man, etc. – in other words, the same masked characters that go with him in our festival. I see it as KEY to keep it in context (6 April 2009).

This is an illustration of *campanilismo* towards festival forms, one festival’s masque being clearly not what another’s might appear to be. There is an implication of superiority, which is not unusual in *campanilismo*. In one possible interpretation, it also implies the taking of a moral high ground, regarding the *Badalisc* not appearing at Carnival, but rather in the winter and definitively at Epiphany. Patrizia was fervently opposed to any identification between the *Badalisc* and the horned goat figure of the neighbouring village, Cevo, whose traditions might seem to an outsider to be similar to the *Badalisc*. As mentioned previously Cevo is the neighbouring town above Andrista, where most of Andrista’s townsfolk must go to shop or work — as in fact Patrizia does. Mario had reminisced about his hometown’s *Basilisc* in our interviews and told the story of how the horned figure comes down from the mountains at Carnival time in Cevo.

Given that we are not in Andrista, we don’t even pronounce the name of the monster the same. In Cevo we say ‘*Basilisc*’ and they say ‘*Badalisc*’. This monster of ours is in the form of a big goat. I remember in my childhood that this monster came down from the mountains, or so they told us, in *Carnevale*. We went into the barn and it was a big wooden mask with horns and

skin over the top. For us in Cevo this is the most traditional masque. He is a big goat like a devil or demon, something dark and scary that goes around at night – not to harm anyone – but just to scare people. After all goats are herbivorous, so it was more about being scary. Anyway, all the kids in the barn were terrified of him (5 January 2008).

Among the remaining questions is why Patrizia and Andrista's townsfolk are so committed to keeping their monster an Epiphany apparition. It may be a denial of things seeming too earthy or sensual that the carnivalesque reversals and 'uncrownings' could bring to the festival. Or it could be a rejection of the profane that much of Carnival seeks to instigate. In certain costumes Crociani-Windland finds much that is 'suggestive, profane and which favours the lower body over the upper (...); at once in touch with the earth, and yet not stuck to it, as plants are, its closeness to instinctual urges, pleasure and procreation that makes it more body than the rest of it' (2007:202; 203; 205). Indeed the swaying serpent monster could be easily seen as phallic, and additionally has animal horns — all symbols identified with the sexual and sensual. Bakhtin and Rabelais show no squeamishness over any form of bodily function, nor do the Tuscans in Crociani-Windland's contemporary studies of festivals. Patrizia's close connection with the parish church, and both hers and Salvatore's accounts of the festival of the Madonna of Mount Carmel in Andrista lead one to believe that they would like the *Badalisc* to remain a chastely moralising monster, and not a ribald carnivalesque or Saturnalian reveller. This may be their goal; however, in the two years that I listened to the *Badalisc*'s speech during the fieldwork, it was apparent that 'he' has some pointedly sexual things to say about the adventures and escapades in the town each year. If their insistence that he remains tied to Epiphany is an attempt to deny other historical Italian mid-winter holiday traditions, such as the Lord of Misrule, (called in Italy *Il Signore di Sregolatezza*), it is misguided. Epiphany was historically a traditional time for wild reversals and bawdy revelling as were Christmas and Easter (Bakhtin, 1984: 74, 78, 79, 81). Ancient and universal senses of embodiment, humour and reversal thus arrive — even if some may wish to close the door upon them.

5.4 Embodied sense of place and exteriorisation through costuming

The embodiment of sense of place and identity-fulfilment through place is evident in Andrista's performing of place, as all the elements join. There are certain local foods gathered and prepared by hand; exact costumes and masks, utilised in specific, traditional ways; and rigid requirements allowing only townsfolk to play central roles. As the previous sections' descriptions of the fieldwork have demonstrated, the festival participants live, breathe and sweat place in a sensual way through the elements of chase, surprise, humour, laughter, dance, food, fire, and communal reunion that make up this ancient annual festival. Grimes describes the 'phenomenology of exteriorisation' that comes through the use of masks and costumes (1975); his work over various decades now has embraced both ritual studies and performance studies. He theorised in recent work, '... if ritual studies is about anything, it is about the embodiment of meanings in social contexts... about meanings embodied in posturing and gesturing' (Grimes, 2006: 35). These points are clearly illustrated in the street theatre, the costumes, the 'posturing and gesturing' that are portrayed in the *Badalisc* festival. As described above, the case for seeing a religious component here is evoked by the deeply ritualised behaviours, the strong moral component and the ardent dedication to carefully orchestrated traditions. The *Badalisc* masques offer examples of Grimes' embodiment and exteriorisation (1975) where through the feasting and food choices, Leynse's concepts of people 'ingesting topography' (2006: 129-136) can also be seen.

Ingold has discussed the relational model of dwelling (2000: 148-151) that can tie humanity together and simultaneously bond community to place. Ingold argues, as do others like Basso (1996), that bonds with place are relational and humans keep cultural memory alive through

‘a practice of remembering, embedded in the perception of the environment’ (Ingold, 2000:148). This epistemology becomes clear in Andrista. One may add a hyphen, as some of my writing has done (Howell, 2010) to say it is also a practice of *re-mem-ber-ing*: the re-integration and re-weaving of community bonds which Orsi recounts in New York City and which my festival research has revealed. In Andrista, as in Tak’s fieldwork in Calvello, native festivalgoers return to ‘refresh themselves at the well of local culture’ (Tak, 2002: 27). Parsons’ comment on the *Palio*, that this festival would happen even if no tourists were present (2004:159), is relevant in Andrista. While they do indeed wish to encourage tourism in order to create income for the tiny village, that is not the primary motivation for the *Badalisc*. He symbolises much more than income or numbers of visitors for the tiny village.

However, despite all the foregoing on sense of place, it is important to remember that sense of place is relative and that one person’s associations with a masque, a festival, a symbol can be very different from another’s. Various Lombardy researchers seem eager to associate the *Badalisc* with ancient Pagan serpent cults and with the horned gods of early agrarian religions, given the local evidence in the nearby petroglyphs (Italo and Marina Montagna, 4-6 January 2000; Gavaldo, 2 April 2010; Danesi et al, 1999; Barozzi and Varini, 1990). These petroglyph parks are discussed below in section 5.6. One year the Andrista *Badalisc* performers had been invited by Italo to a nearby town, Italo and Marina’s home, to perform in a festival which takes place at the end of February. It is a carnivalesque celebration called ‘The Witches Ceremony’ (*Ceremonia delle Streghe*). Patrizia’s response was vehemently negative:

The *Badalisc* has no part in the Witches’ Ceremony at the end of February in *Saviore*, or these others at Carnival time. If we put the *Badalisc* there, it could break up and destroy the traditions passed down from our great-great-great- grandparents (6 April 2009).

Thus a possible theory is that the Andrista organisers and festival committee members may be shying away from Pagan associations in the *Badalisc festa*. Another possible theory is that they are resisting the *Badalisc* being associated with traditional Italian masques, such as those of Harlequin and *Pulcinella*. These are associated with the Italian *Commedia dell'Arte*, the early theatrical form that later playwrights such as Goldoni drew upon, and which is well known to every Italian. Grimes (1975) notes that with a masque like the *Commedia dell'Arte* characters, 'such a character becomes so familiar to the audience that he is predictable, frozen as it were, despite the liveliness with which roles are imaginatively played by actors' (1975:511). This loss of power through humour also happens in traditional comedic portrayals of Catholic priests or mediaeval monks, where the clergy were morally disempowered due to mordent vernacular satire. This is known in Bakhtin as 'the mighty realm of the travesty of the low clergy' (Bakhtin, 1984: 86). Patrizia and the other organisers and portrayers of the *Badalisc* may not want their magic monster of morality to become stock, staid, or to lose his power to influence the townspeople.

This provides further examples of Grimes' theory of 'concretion', where 'otherness resides in the mask; in concealment otherness is generated and used by the mask' (1975: 512). The *Badalisc's* otherness is heavily nuanced, Other and yet not, concealed yet revealed; he is not only a symbol of Andrista's identity, but their compass and moralising monster whose season and seasonal associations are specific.

5.4.1 Relationality and materiality in the festival masques

Bennet coined the phrase 'thing-power' (Bennet, 2004). The *Badalisc* masque and costume exhibit a form of materiality that is heavily endowed and inter-animated with place and

identity in Andrista. It has both place-power and thing-power. The locals are invested in protecting the masque, because its power is tied integrally with them. If the *Badalisc* were to disappear and did not return to critique the village on Epiphany Eve, the village would lose a big part of its heart: both its identity as well as its economics would suffer a devastating loss.

Andrista's *Badalisc* exemplifies this thesis' theory of place as the Other portrayed in festival. Patrizia and fellow townsfolk's objections to the *Badalisc* being seen as nothing but a performer, a simple funny masque, speaks to their belief in him as an embodiment of the *Genius loci* of their village. He is not a mere theatrical character, but a real being whose Otherness is precious to them. Patrizia's protection of the date for the festival, Salvatore's reminiscences and comments on the guidance the festival offers the town, then the efforts by surrounding villages on the isolated mountainsides to incorporate the *Badalisc* into their festivities, (and the subsequent reaction against it in Andrista) all speak of a passionately ingrained sense of place. There is a dramatic relational epistemology in Andrista residents, endeavouring to make the same polenta their grandparents may have made, or to find materials to build the masques in the traditional manner. For example, some participants spoke critically of the *Badalisc* costume not being entirely natural skin or other locally-derived materials any more, but being partly synthetic. There is a poetic sense of deep dwelling in their fervent commitment to keep the traditions alive, despite hardships, war, and the social fragmenting wrought by internal migration. Some local residents are now making wine and alcoholic spirits for the *Badalisc* (6 April 2009) (Scarduelli, 2008). The production is not in large quantities — not a large commercial venture — nonetheless, the wine offers another means of ingesting sense of place (Leynse, 2006).

The relationality of the festival offers a glowing strand of interconnected lives between village and emigrants, between generations, among residents of the area, all interwoven through the materiality of Epiphany's serpent monster.

5.5 Civil religion and festival as ritual in Andrista

Parsons' writings on Siena are reviewed in Chapters two and four, as are Crociani-Windland's observations on the *Palio* and other Tuscan festivals. Some pertinent concepts of Parsons' work discuss civic religion as an ancient concept often carried forward into contemporary society, where it becomes *civil* religion. Such a discussion helps to understand not only Siena and large festivals of long tradition like the *Palio* and others in Italy, but also the passionate feelings that other smaller festivals in Italy can engender in the organisers and participants.

The *Palio* of Siena, however, is much more than simply a tourist attraction; it is no less than the principal means by which the distinctive traditions and culture of Siena and the Siennese have been – and still are – maintained, nurtured and passed down the generations. It is also (...) a festival which links the civic identity and rituals of modern and contemporary Siena to the civic rituals and traditions of medieval, renaissance and early modern Siena (Parsons, 2004: xiv).

This is a significant passage for Andrista's *Badalisc*. My comparing the *Palio*, an event of enormous scale in a city of 50,000, to the miniscule event in Andrista's hamlet of 100 might seem unfounded. However, the *Badalisc*, a tradition which symbolises many of the points my thesis illustrates, is a microcosm of the macrocosm. The fervent views of all those engaged with the *Badalisc*, observers as well as organisers, some at loggerheads with each other, demonstrate how the *Badalisc* links the past with the present and the future. As Patrizia said in our interview in Cevo in spring 2009,

I am not a scholar, and do not have either any of the schooling for that, nor the capacities. I am a person who is strenuously defending my community and my tiny community's customs (6 April 2009).

My argument is that the *Badalisc* is an example of civil religion, in that there is a strong faith element to the festival. In addition, the *Badalisc* festival organisers assert traditional mores and values in the isolated mountain community, and this offers other elements of the civil religion — a shared identity and sense of morality. These are factors that display fundamental characteristics of a civil religion, as Parsons defines it, drawing on Bellah, Pierard and Linder (Parsons, 2004: xiv-xv). Other elements of the *Badalisc* festival contribute aspects of an Italian civil religion, such as the sacredness bestowed on the village by the ritual. In the winter darkness the town gathers to watch the procession of the *Badalisc* into town, and the horned serpent's path into the village is blessed and purified, as is the little village. Later, the ritual foods likewise are blessed for consumption by villagers. If my fieldwork were to include the ceremonies in July for the Madonna of Mount Carmel, there would very likely be overlap between the two festivals in the sense of Andrista's civil religion including both *Badalisc* and Madonna. Both take place in the same geographic space, both contribute a sense of identity to the village, both are figures to whom the villagers return each year.

The Catholic influence on the festival was much stronger at one time (a point which most of my participants mentioned). Until very recently, women were not merely banned from the festival enactment — any women who participated were excommunicated by the local parish priest. Patrizia told me (twice in fact) that she is disturbed by the fact that the *festa del Badalisc* does not have the same strong Catholic underpinning of past generations. This comment seemed a bit ironic given the fact that, if the festival had maintained the same staunchly Catholic foundation of past decades and centuries, she would not have been able to participate. In any case, as examples of how certain components have changed, she mentioned in our interviews in 2008 and again in 2009 that one of the ancient traditions involving the village children had disappeared in the last two decades. As mentioned earlier,

at one time the children would collect corn meal throughout the village to make a traditional recipe of polenta. They then would take the specially cooked *polenta del Badalisc*, the local corn meal dish, to the Church to be blessed. (Today apparently not only do they not go to Mass, they do not use the collected polenta, due to contemporary hygiene concerns. Two participants told me this.) According to Patrizia as well as other local sources, there was a traditional sausage that people made specially for the festival, *un salamino*, called *strenucce*, that also was blessed in the Epiphany Mass. Patrizia is nostalgic for the old traditions and worries that the Epiphany Mass does not today have the same connection to the old *Badalisc* traditions, nor do the children offer their traditional foods to the Baby Jesus (while kissing him). However, she told me that the second day of the festival is still primarily for children, and they do cook the hot corn meal dish, *polenta del Badalisc*, for the children. Consequently, while the *Badalisc* has become somewhat divorced from the Church's traditions of Epiphany, the festival still maintains a potent materiality. There are echoes of a widely observed civil religion in tiny Andrista, perhaps only echoes today, but the locals' belief in the power of the *festa* endures through its profound place-based elements.

5. 6 Place as actor: Valcamonica's extraordinary petroglyph parks

One morning in early spring synchronicous events led me to a discovery giving remarkable evidence to the place-power of the region. In Spring of 2009, as I was pursuing some further research on the *Badalisc* and en route to spend time in Andrista with Patrizia, I drove through the village at the foot of the mountain, Capo di Ponte. I was drawn to stop in a little shop with local crafts and antiques, and in chatting with the shopkeeper, Katia, I commented on a dragon statue. She remarked, 'Yes, dragons are not usually very Italian, but we do have a kind of dragon here in the area' (6 April 2009). I followed this remark up and discovered that she

came from a family of local amateur folklorists and archaeologists that has researched the rock parks and knows them well. As Katia explained, the rock carving parks of Seradina and Bedolina sit above Capo di Ponte in the north end of the valley. She explicitly said that there was a definite connection in their minds between the ‘dragon’ — as they called it — in the rock art and the *Badalisc*. Following her directions, I climbed up the hillside in my car, parked and then walked along the quiet, solitary mountain trails to explore some of the lesser-known parks. One hillside particularly caught my attention, as it is not only covered in petroglyphs, but when carefully taking in the view, I realised that the rock carving areas look across the valley directly at the mountain of the *Badalisc*, (and *Basalisc* as well), where Andrista and Cevo perch.

These parks exemplify the concept taken of place not merely as the ‘backdrop of action but rather a force that forms actions and actors’ (Grimes, 2007: 107): in essence the carvings form a foreground or set a stage for the mountain across the valley. These place-based associations with the *Badalisc* are supported by the work of the professional government archaeologists as well. Two archaeologists working for the State ‘Valcamonica Department of the Camun Centre of Prehistoric Studies’ (*Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici, Dipartimento Valcamonica e Lombardia*) have published their findings that horned serpent figures definitely can be found in the nearby valley below Andrista, and also on peaks on the opposite side of the valley (Sansoni and Gavaldo, 1995, 2009; Gavaldo, 2001; Gavaldo, 2 April 2010; Sansoni, 12 November 2010). There are Copper Age and later Bronze Age carvings of horned figures, and others of serpents. In our communications they have speculated that — it is often speculative about the carvings — there are both serpents, as well as what could be interpreted as horned serpents, in the area of carvings directly across the valley (2 April 2010; 12 November 2010). Other local sources, such as a nonprofit organisation *Amici del Sentiero*

Etrusco Celtico (Friends of the Etruscan Celtic Trail) whose literature specifically studies the rock engravings, tombs and dolmen in the area, describes serpent figures present in rock carvings just above Andrista, at nearby Androla (Danesi et al, 1999: 32-33; 37). Likewise festival fieldwork participants speculated in interviews about the connection between the figure of the horned serpent figure of Andrista as well as the horned goat-like figure of nearby Cevo with the petroglyphs in the valley. Local lore discusses an ancient water cult that venerated serpents; others, including local archaeologists, discuss the horned gods of later agrarian cults (Gavaldo, 2001; Danesi and Cervelli, date n/a). The *Badalisc* is both serpent-like and horned, therefore local residents discuss both when searching for his origins in our conversations.

Andrista's festival offers an exceptional example of how place can be both backdrop and actor. Barron (2006) observed that the revered *Majella Massif* mountain in southern Italy has agency. Tak writes how 'Local landscapes (are) germane to the particular ways of how ritual constructs identities and meanings...' (Tak, 2000:252). Grimes reviews Smith's perspectives on place and its potential for agency, saying that 'It is not just the context or backdrop of action, but rather a force that forms actions and actors' (Grimes, 2007:107). Grimes uses a performance-related turn of phrase to describe this force.

For Smith, place is not only central, it is active. As he imagines it, a place is not a mere empty or passive receptacle. (...) he (casts) place as lead actor (Grimes, 2007: 108).

Happily, many of these remarkable sites in the long river valley below Andrista and Cevo are now protected by UNESCO as a world heritage site due to the petroglyphs. Though unknown to many even in Italy itself, in northern Lombardy the rock carvings manifest a fascinating place-based connection between festival and landscape, demonstrating the potent and yet often overlooked power and influence of place.



Figure 10 – Rock carvings in park that looks across valley to Andrista

5.6.1 Possible dates for the festival origins

While nothing in my research (to date) seems to firmly date or confirm the origins of the festival, internet research indicates that the parish at Andrista has records going back to 1686 on the *festa* of the *Badalisc* (Barozzi and Varini, 1990). Yet the librarian in Cevo, where a

collection of books on the *Badalisc* is held, did not know where this parish hall might be, and there was no evidence of it in my research in Andrista. I let it go, as this is an ethnographic study, and focused on the accounts of the people at the fair or those who are involved in the fair, as well as on the local resources such as the newspapers, the library. The *festa* is certainly ‘very ancient’, and appears from all sources to be the longest running festival of the case studies reviewed in this thesis.

5.7 Time folds: polychronic views of performing place

The multiple relationships with time, space and place in the *Badalisc* at Andrista are an example of other theories relating to performing a landscape. Lymer, Olivier and Witmore have discussed theories regarding their own archaeological work, as well as their criticisms of archaeology’s failings. Witmore and Lymer theorise on non-linear perceptions of time that at some moments and in some places become polychronic (Lymer, 2010; Olivier, 2004: 207-209; Witmore, 2006: 269; 279-280). Other times and influences bubble up into the present, ‘percolating’ it as it were: ‘Landscape is multitemporal. Its polychronic reality is not the result of passing time, but of its percolation’ (Witmore, 2006: 280). Laurent Olivier likewise uses the term ‘multi-temporal’ in describing the constant intersections of past with present around us in the world (2004: 205). They and other archaeologists have written on time as sometimes ‘folding’, thus enfolding the coexisting present and past as demonstrated by people’s interactions with the landscape (Lymer, 2010; Olivier, 2004: 209; Witmore, 2006: 279-280).

Lymer wrote:

The rock art images were intricately related to complex values and beliefs embedded in time, place, society and culture. Their spaces are entangled in a nexus of relationships related to the experiences of local community with the landscape and mediated through sensual engagements, visions, dreams and encounters with other times (Lymer, 2010).

These ‘sensual engagements’ can emerge in performances, like Andrista’s. In Witmore’s view, performance through ritual and other expressions offers an embodiment of place and time that can bring the distant past into the present in a polychronic as well as multi-sensory manifestation (Witmore, 2006: 281). Lymer asserts that rag-tying traditions in a rock art area of Kazakhstan likewise show that popular religious practices help communities negotiate the interactions among popular tradition, established religion and engagement with landscape (Lymer, 2004: 158-169). His work took place in a Muslim area heavily influenced by Sufism, where a mystical relationship with the landscape and its indwelling spirit or spirits outlived the homogenising effects of Soviet oppression and other destructive philosophies (Lymer, 2004: 158; 161). My work in Catholic Italy bears similar resonance where likewise a ‘mystical relationship with the landscape’ endures, despite the potentially disenchanting effects of industrialisation, globalisation, emigration, and so forth.

The sections that follow relate these theories not only to Andrista’s *Badalisc* but also to Milan’s Celtic New Year.

5.8 Conclusion

The customs exhibited in these little communities evoke other centuries as multiple eras percolate through into contemporary moments (Witmore, 2006). Lymer wrote in his paper’s abstract for the British Association for the Study of Religion in 2009,

...contemporary folk rites (...) are not the fossilized remains of ‘primitive’ customs, but dynamic engagements that create polychronic realities which intimately entwine the past with the present. (...) these rock art sites demonstrate a remarkable persistence of liminality in the landscape as people over the centuries have actively interacted with these special places since prehistoric times.

In whatever way the nearby petroglyphs may have resonated in the creators of the *Badalisc*, whenever in history that was, and no matter whether he appears at Epiphany, Carnival or any other time, there exists a dynamic bridge between place and community in Andrista. It is sensuous and placeful, redolent of polenta and local sausage, and re-integrating long-standing relational epistemologies of place and kinship. The *Badalisc* ‘presides over a sense world’ that shapes people’s morality, perspectives and behaviours (Orsi, 2002:172-173). Swanson’s phrase sums up this evocative moment in its dramatic natural setting: ‘Rituals are irreplaceable responses to... irreplaceable places’ (Swanson, 1994: 262, cited in Grimes, 2006: 111). Whatever the deeper reasoning behind Andrista’s protection of the *Badalisc*, in whatever way the dialect or dance may continue adapting in years to come, this ritualised festival offers a potent example of an embodied process creating embodied poetry of dwelling. The *Badalisc* performs the land in the polychronic time of the *festa*, which offers annual re-integration of identity to the extended community in Andrista.

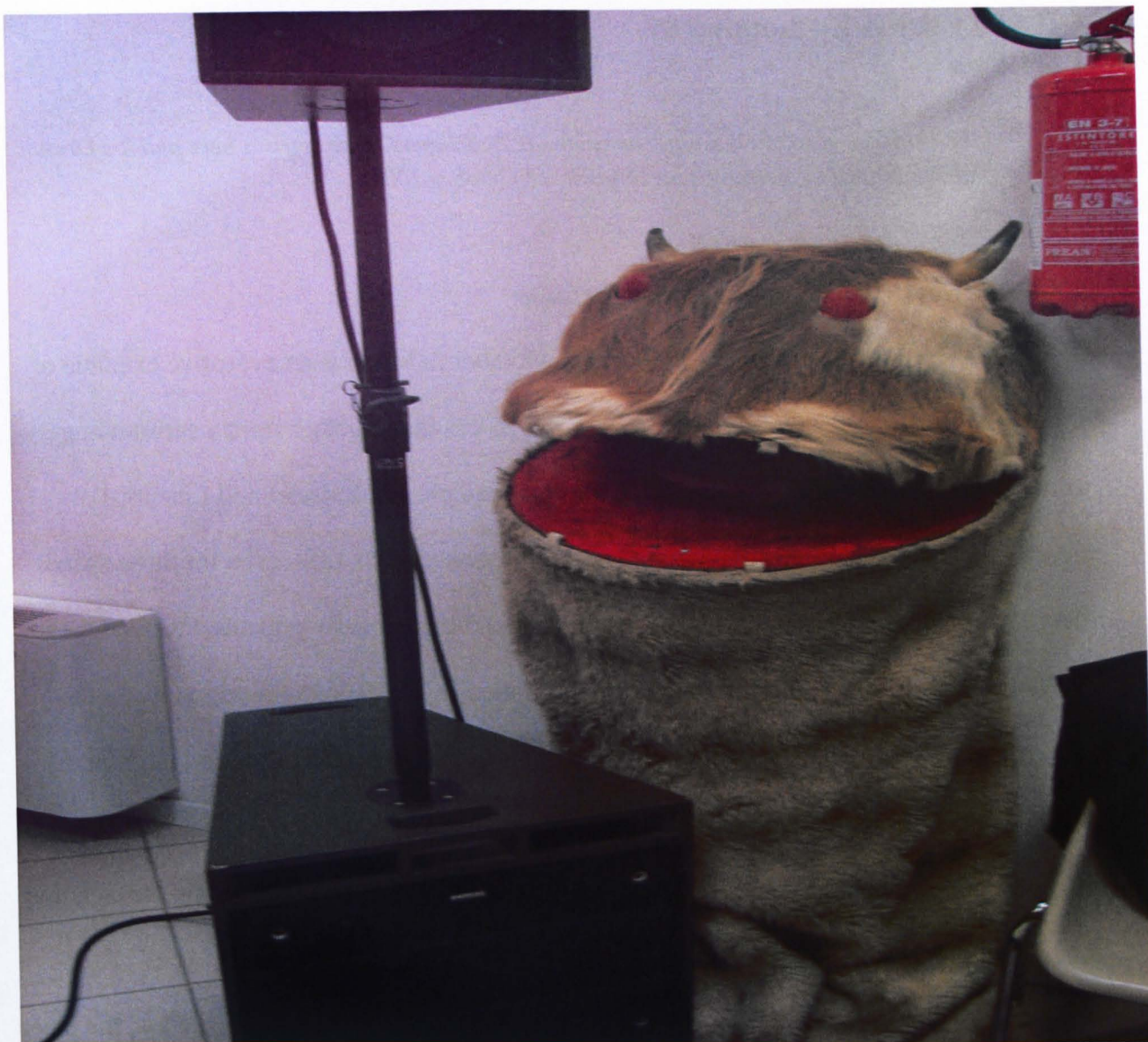


Figure 11 - The *Badalisc* at rest in his party

CHAPTER FIVE - Lombardy

Part Two

...the Goddess of Milan is Celtic, her name is Bellisama... Her spirit is here and it's Druidic (Valeria Morgana, fieldwork participant, 18 October 2008).

5. 9 Celtic New Year at Milan's *Sforzesco* Castle

Celtic New Year, or *Capodanno Celtico*, each October in Milan is an evocative example of how northern Italian festivals create 'meaningful places that together form a surrounding world' (Gray, 2003: 232). The festival is also an example of Chidester and Linenthal's theories that 'sacred space is inevitably contested space' (1995: 15) – even for those spaces that may or may not be sacred to all. The actual site of this recently organised festival, begun in 1999, is certainly meaningful: it is the site of a mediaeval castle, built originally by the early rulers of Milan, the Visconti family, then taken over by the next dynasty, the Sforza family —hence its name: *Sforzesco*. There is reason to believe that the site has been used since Roman times and previous to them, since the Gauls ruled in northern Italy. In fact, this is a central point in the discussion below. The structure there today appears to be Renaissance, but it was actually fully rebuilt in the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the place is a point of pride, of *campanilismo*-style loyalty and identification for the Milanese, as well as being a rendez-vous point and a place of enjoyment for its museums, concerts and green space. The grand structure can have a powerful and place-ful impact on visitors, as well as on festival participants. One Celtic New Year re-enactor said in our interview: 'When I came here and saw all this, with the Castle surrounded by mists, I felt like I was comfortable, at home, for the first time' (Irene, 25 October 2008).



Figure 12 - The central tower of the *Sforzesco* Castle, *Sempione* park, downtown Milan

As the autumn returns to Milan each October, a uniquely northern Italian event also unfolds now annually at the grand central Castle and surrounding park: *Capodanno Celtico*— Celtic New Year. My first awareness of the fair was when jogging through the park; to my astonishment I discovered posters describing a fair coming which would celebrate ‘Samhain’, the Celtic festival of harvest’s end, theoretically the end of the Celtic calendar year. It is called in Italian ‘*Samonios*’. When I returned to investigate what this festival might offer, I discovered a transformation had taken place in the city park: people on horseback and on foot in costumes of every description evoking ancient eras, encampments with Iron Age and

earlier tools, and so on. There were craftspeople selling their wares, with every possible sort of both New Age or Pagan jewellery, statuary, artwork, and so on; Tarot card readers, face painters — all reminiscent of what in America would be known as ‘Renaissance Fair’ type vendors and market stalls. However, what made this festival notably place-specific, is that there were posters and artwork, crafts, foods and drink dedicated and derived from the pre-Roman tribes of northern Italy. Even the very twenty-first century cafe wagon selling foods was offering geographically-appropriate sausages, pastas, polenta, drinks, wines and puddings. It was not like any Renaissance fair — ‘faire’ as they are often termed — that I had ever encountered. The music, dance and other performances offered were from all over the related cultures of the Celtic world, including Bretons, Irish, Scots, and so forth. Every night for three nights the park and its environs reverberate and vibrate with music and dance like an Irish or Scottish Ceilidh till the very trees seem to sparkle.

For the next two years I returned to observe and to carry out interviews. The interviews were both prior to the festival in diverse occasions with organisers, participants and re-enactors; then also in the festival. I also attended the conference and art exhibit connected with the festivals themes, both offered by the festival sponsors. Those interviews are included in sections below. At the festival I randomly stopped people wandering past, sitting down to eat, and chatted with groups who were visiting or regarding the market stalls— young, old, foreign, native, male and female. I also spoke with re-enactors in their Gallo-Celtic styled encampments. As the fieldwork interviews reveal in the following sections, many engaged in the festival spoke directly to their experience of sensing the mysterious, place energies unleashed by Celtic New Year. Some believed they could sense an ‘underworld’ quality. Others spoke to the sense of belonging, the new relationality discovered through the festival experience in one form or another.

Irene, the young woman quoted above, is a re-enactor who was not native to Milan, but to Lombardy. She belonged to a group called the ‘Lions of Brescia’, drawing their name from the Roman reference to what they regarded as uncivilised places one might not want to visit, ‘*Hic sunt leones*’ (‘Here there be lions’). (Alessandro, the chief organiser of the group told me this in a spontaneous interview, discussed below.) Irene was petite, blonde, in a light-coloured gown, and was practicing various crafts in what the group believed were correct historical representations. In our conversations I did hear her mix periods somewhat — for example, her loom was modeled on one from 700 CE, which would have been the Lombard period. (She also practiced archery, but in a different costume, male attire, she proudly told me.) Irene claimed that in fifteen years living in Milan she had never felt at home till she came to the park at the time of Celtic New Year. Seeing the costuming, the vendors, the Castle surrounded by it all, she began to feel at home for the first time. One of her points exemplifies the unifying bonds of relationality that can arise through a festival, through certain involvements such as this one.

Here there was no fashion world, there was no religion. We all have our own lives, our own private lives and professions – one person is an architect, another is a doctor, from all parts of the culture, but we live as one great family. We get together at the fairs or camps, and live as one (Irene, 26 October 2008).

(Her comment was interesting since she may not have been aware of the religious movement also finding its home and its sense of new belonging in Celtic New Year. These aspects of the festival are discussed below.) The leader of the group, Alessandro, came over during our interview to contribute as well, a dashing dark haired figure in chain mail, which he said had all been made by hand — 16, 000 rings of mail. He explained that they re-enact both the pre-Roman period, such as their 3rd century BCE camp that day at the festival, and the mediaeval period. Alessandro seemed to resonate to my questions on place and expressed why they feel historical awareness is important.

People need this, this sense of being connected to their region, their place. What we have now is not from us, it's from those who lived here before us. It's important to study them and know who left us all this. It's like a present. And then we must give it to the next generation, in this same place (Alessandro, 25 October 2008).

Other spontaneous interviews expressed a similar feeling of contentment and of 'belonging' that arose through their involvement in Celtic New Year and its historical re-enactors.

One formal interview was with Sara Fiorentini, a young woman re-enactor from another historical group and a native of Milan. We interviewed in a sidewalk cafe one sunny afternoon before the festival. In discussing place-power and awareness of the land, she brought up that she has observed how children in particular feel the sense of place offered by the festival.

In my opinion people literally have to learn to listen, to feel. Depending on the person of course. Most people come for the merchants and the crafts, some do come for the underlying reasons of the Fair, for the culture behind it. There are always more and more people coming, but there still are not many who really "feel" the true sense of it. The little children feel more. The Scouts for example — I bring my group of young Scouts here. They are fascinated by the way that people lived, and are interested in the traditions that remain today. Like Samhain (Sara Fiorentini, 18 September 2008).

These interviews demonstrate that there are diverse experiences of belonging that arise in festival, which may differ from other forms of relationality such as those observed in tiny Andrista. Despite the difference in these two festivals the experience of belonging which can arise in Milan's Celtic New Year is a kind of 'coming home', which nonetheless may offer a satisfying sense of personal re-integration.

5.9.1 We put on our cloaks and are free

In the forms of 'Otherness' that spring forth through Celtic New Year the festival has become an annual venue in which the newly growing northern Italian Pagan community can meet (Howell, 2008b). Walking through the festival, it would be difficult to miss the overtly Pagan presence — or so it would seem: men and women in flowing robes, men with long beards and

shoulder or even waist-length hair. The sight of so many people in robes, cloaks, flower crowns, Celtic torc jewelry around their necks and so forth, in the middle of Milan, gives a vivid clue that this festival has a different tone and concept than others. Various participants in Celtic New Year who interviewed for this study are involved in some tradition of Paganism, such as Druidry or Wicca, among others. These interviewees, many of whom have participated in Celtic New Year since its inception, described to me how they take full advantage of the networks and social milieu offered by Celtic New Year.

Valeria Morgana is another native participant in the thesis fieldwork. Valeria has a long family heritage in Milan and Lombardy, and each year she is a vendor and Tarot card reader at Celtic New Year. She is a member of the Pagan community engaged in Celtic New Year. Two of her evocative comments are cited at the head of Chapter five, parts one and two. I visited with Valeria before the festival in 2008 for a formal interview, and also spoke with her at the festival during various years. Our formal interview took place at a monthly gathering in Milan, known as ‘The Witches Cafe’, held in what was formerly a Socialist meeting club, and is today a lively ethnic food restaurant. Valeria spoke poetically of her love for her hometown and how the festival expresses Milan’s origins. She believes it conveys sense of place clearly to the festival visitors.

People who come can sense that it’s a rather unusual festival, due to the re-enactments, etc. In part it is due to the merchants and the stalls, which are chosen specifically for the sort of crafts they sell. However, Milan already has this feeling! Milan has a strong sense of place. For example, last night Milan had a very powerful air of Samhain. It had entered into that phase of feeling! It is a bit because of the darkness coming on now, but also for the smells, the leaves and the colours. It’s hard to say why Milan would have more of a magical sense at this time of year, but it does. It becomes very magical, in the sense of the things that people believe come out. Milan is a secret, mysterious place – its courtyards, its alleyways. I don’t know but my intuition is that Milan has a Celtic spirit. In other words, it isn’t Roman. It wasn’t founded by the Romans (18 October 2008).

Diverse cultures are represented in Celtic New Year, unified by the theme of people wishing to re-enact ancient history, or to live out a Pagan past for a few days while being right in the middle of a postmodern urban centre. A space of new identity is created by the connections interacting on the Castle grounds and in the park behind it, where indeed the Other can become present. There may be multiple senses of the Other: that of a new religious movement, the Other of a sense of place emanating from an ancient *nemeton* beneath the park and castle grounds. It could also be the Other of a new Italian identity. There arises exteriorisation and embodiment of sense of place that is uncommon within Milan itself and within Italy. Valeria expressed these attributes, describing how she sensed that Celtic New Year brought back a community feeling Milan had lost.

If you go into any little town there are festivals – nearly every Sunday. There are festivals where they celebrate the harvest or whatever, but not in Milan. Not anymore. We've lost it here. Well, maybe some little neighbourhoods have them. But generally the city has lost them. So *Capodanno Celtico* and Samhain can be that for Milan. Even though the festival of the patron of Milan *should* be the festival that expressed Milan most, St. Ambrose, (*San Ambrogio*) in December, it doesn't anymore. It's become too commercial, not local anymore. So in my opinion, Celtic New Year (*Capodanno Celtico*) is the festival that really *is* Milan (18 October 2009).

On a more specific note of belonging and of identity, for the Pagan community the festival is a time when they can liberate their identity in a culture where being Other is not well accepted. In the Italy of *Bella Figura*, where the social more of having to present a perfect image at all times holds sway powerfully, and which is additionally a Catholic culture, the alternative culture of Pagan Otherness could cause one to be ostracised or worse. Valeria made the connection between the festival as an opportunity to experience alternative culture, as well as for developing sense of place together as a Pagan community.

It's very nice, since in Milan it's one chance to be able to meet all together, once a year, in a Milan park. In these three days we can come to Milan in our cloaks. We go around Milan in our cloaks, and it gives us a huge sense of pleasure. We Witches have our own style of dress, it is meaningful to us, and we have permission to – we could do it all the time, we don't care!

However, seeing so many people dressed that way for three days is special to us. We see all these Pagans, all these Wiccans, and this time is lovely because we see in some way that together here we put down roots (18 October 2009).

One Wiccan man, Gerardo, said of Celtic New Year: ‘At least at Celtic New Year, we finally have a place where we can put on our cloaks and be free’ (25 October 2008).

Other Pagan participants who are visitors to the fair each year but not vendors, also spoke of how they enjoy seizing the chance to garb themselves in colourful costuming. I stopped a group of young women amidst the festival booths one afternoon. (The photo is given below in figure 6.) Their comments agreed with Valeria and Gerardo’s sentiments.

It’s lovely to be able to share this experience. This makes it all very real, and you do it all as a community. We come to the fair because it is an excellent reunion place, a meeting point for the Pagan community, which is also a beautiful event with great significance. Making it more Italian, and less a Hallowe’en event imported from America, makes it more native and also less commercial. It makes the fair much better (25 October 2008).

Strangely enough, despite liking the fact that ‘*Samonios*’ became more Italian to them, they also told me that they attended the festival each year in witchy costuming and annually made a practice of giving out candy to children. This seemed to me a more Hallowe’en-style of celebration, like ‘Trick or Treat’. Other members of the Pagan community whom I met there told me they dressed in ‘witchy’ gowns and cloaks, and gave out flyers depicting what Paganism is, and what it is not — in other words, they admitted that they were taking advantage of Celtic New Year’s Hallowe’en association to try to dispel some of the negative conceptions about Paganism.

The Chief Druid and Druidess of one large Piedmont community of Druidry practitioners, Oscar and Melissa Quercia, have been involved with Celtic New Year since its inception. We had a formal interview in 2008, and I also visited with them at their festival booth during

various years. Oscar and Melissa make a striking couple, wearing robes elaborately decorated with Celtic designs, abundant jewelry and tattoos, and both with waist-length hair. Oscar is a craftsman, jeweller and musician; he makes Celtic-style jewellery in silver and pewter, which he and Melissa sell at his stand; they also sell other crafts made by other artisans, books and recordings. He expressed how in the last few years the energy of Milan had transformed the Celtic New Year festival.

It's hard for Milan to have a people's fair, a traditional cultural fair. Milan is big business, and so now Celtic New Year is business too! (laughs) But the important thing is that there is still a message behind it all. Another good thing is that today there is more involvement in the fair from people of other paths. For example some years ago there was this new 'wave' of Wicca in Italy. So, it's been very nice that there are more crafts now there with Pagan things – Druid and Wiccan – and it's become a place for Pagans to meet now (26 January 2008).

Oscar veered from criticising the commercialism to a more positive view of it being a community festival despite the business-like ambiance and political underpinnings discreetly behind it. In our first interview Oscar had described how the organisers had contacted him, during the period when they were first planning the festival. He already knew of their political affiliation and that the idea has sprung perhaps out of a political 'discussion or need', as he put it. 'The political discussion is not of interest to me — I'm interested in the magical discussion'. He could sense that the timing was right for the festival and he saw the desire in northern Italians to know more about their Celtic history.

It was as though people had had a rebirth in their genes. People woke up again, saying "Ah, here is a voice I hear in my soul!" And it began a whole series of events (26 January 2008).

Oscar does not share the views of the Northern League and is not a member of the party — however, he realised the significance of the financial backing that it would provide. Oscar had remarked in our interview that the financial support was a good thing for both the participant-visitors as well as the vendors, as it meant lower fees for vendors and no entrance fee for the visitors. This is still the case. The festival is open to the public and no tickets are

required for any of the events, even for well-known performers. These components all speak to the power and the financial support provided to the festival by having the Northern League's integral participation. (The Northern League is discussed more in further sections below.) Oscar wove in his perceptions of the energies of the environment surrounding the festival impacting the event, in a blended dance of the cultural, the commercial, the community. His comments show the way the energies can flow both ways in a festival space: from organisers to environment, from environment to participants, from culture to participants.

Their presence at Celtic New Year draws other Druidry and Celtic spirituality practitioners to it, as is logical. They are an example of the networks in action, as their extended families (who are not necessarily Pagan) also participate in the festival; and their community follows them into Milan, which it otherwise might not do. Sapelli has written that Italians take their networks with them from place to place, or if not the actual network itself, then the 'models of reciprocity and family ties on a local basis' (Sapelli, 1995: 44). Rodman's theories of multivocality and multilocality apply to Milan's urban environment, made up of diverse people moved in from other towns and other countries, yet establishing a culture and network of their own (Rodman, 2003: 212). The Pagan, Celtic-spirituality and generally alternative communities offer examples of networks and cultures that have found both their home and a form of freedom in Celtic New Year, where the Other meets sense of place. This festival is unique in this thesis for its intersection with theories discussed by scholars of Pagan gatherings, such as Pike. Pike has observed the sense of belonging while still being aware of their marginality, which the Italians expressed here, in her work on — what she prefers to term Neopagan — festivals in America (2001: 31; 37-40).



Figure 13 – Reunion at Celtic New Year

5.9.2 Community, time percolation and sense of place — amidst the market stalls

Nineteen people stopped and interviewed spontaneously with me during the festival in 2008, i.e. not participants interviewed formally before it or afterwards, but rather on-the-spot surveys of visitors. Among those spontaneous interviews only one person completely rejected the ideas of sense of place or Celticity, stating that there was no meaning in the festival beyond the commercial. He felt that the festival was too new and too commercialised

to allow a profound or meaningful sense of place to come through, nor a sense of intermingling time periods. This interviewee felt other festivals in Milan offered more, although he did not specify which ones. Three long time Milanese residents and natives whom I interviewed formally, elderly Laura Frassino the near-by grocer, Gallic tribal re-enactor Sara, and Pagan craft vendor and tarot reader Valeria, all individually brought up another festival, the traditional December Milanese patron saint's fair, Saint Ambrose, contrasting it to Celtic New Year. Two of them, Valeria and Laura, stated that despite being the *festa* of the city's patron saint, it had lost its singularly Milanese sense of place. Their reasoning seemed to be that it had become an enormous commercial marketplace, and — referring to discussions of what embodies place best — that it had lost its Milanese flavour. Valeria brought up the festival in our formal interview. Given that she is a native of Milan, she had visited the saint's day fair many times, from childhood, and felt it had once been the most typically representative of a traditional Italian *festa*. She noted that the name still is Milanese, '*O Bei, O Bei*', the dialectal name for the arts and crafts market which accompanies the saint's day celebrations. The two older women, Valeria and Laura, felt that by offering crafts and products that were not local the fair had lost its meaningfulness. (In fact they both separately, not knowing each other at all, mentioned how it was now full of cheaply made imports.) All three reported the loss of local, bio-regional identification through the vendors, crafts, foods, art, being the same as those sold in any market on any given day. Sara is a re-enactor in the Saint Ambrose festival as well as in Celtic New Year; she still believed that it maintained a certain Milanese identity and sense of place, through its street theatre depicting the saint's life. I attended the Saint Ambrose market in 2008, although I did not see the performances about the saint in which Sara had participated. Indeed the contrast with Celtic New Year was very clear. The market takes place on the same grounds, at the Castle and the park behind, *Sempione*, but does not seem to offer local or regional flavour. There was the

sense of it being, as the vernacular expression goes, ‘A victim of its own success’: the crowds at the Saint Ambrose festival were so numerous that one could barely see or approach the vendors’ stalls or the food stands. It even seemed a dangerous situation due to the possibility of being trampled by the enormous crowds. Of all the people who stopped and interviewed spontaneously in 2008 only three denied that the Celtic New Year had helped them to experience Milan’s sense of place in any meaningful manner. Another surprising source of criticism of the festival’s sense of place came from Oscar and his wife Melissa. In communications after the festival in 2008 and reflecting on their plans for future involvement, they criticised the commercialism that they feel has taken root strongly at Celtic New Year.

I have to tell you sincerely that for us Celtic New Year is mostly a commercial endeavour now and nothing more (15 September 2009).

In previous interviews Oscar had refrained from criticising the commercialism quite so directly, offering a more positive view of it being a community festival despite the business-like ambiance.

At the end of the festival Sunday night, the dark drew on, the crowds diminished and the Castle grounds began to take back their customary night-time quiet. I took advantage of fewer crowds at stalls to have a few final interviews. In contrast to Oscar’s feelings above, another married couple who work each year at the fair as vendors of Pagan-style and Celtic-style statues and jewellery spoke of their belief in the festival’s sense of place.

There is a great sense of place here, and it helps people to relax. This fair is more open, more welcoming than the fairs we do in our hometown of Turin. Even though this fair is big, it has an intimate feeling. People talk to each other. We only do Celtic fairs, because of the ambiance and the community that is represented. The important thing is the human contact and the relating, the communicating (26 October 2008).

The night darkened, the strains of Celtic music here and there filtered through the shadows and the Castle grounds became enveloped in autumn mists; it was hard not to feel an

otherworldly liminality emerging in the old centre of Milan. The afternoon had likewise offered such an ambiance, as the Gallic re-enactors like Irene, Alessandro and Sara performed traditional activities in Iron Age-styled settlements — sang, performed music, fought, trotted past on horseback, wove garments and so forth. Lymer describes, drawing on Olivier (2004) and Witmore (2006), how multiple time periods meet and ‘percolate’ together (Witmore, 2006: 280-281); this happens constantly in our lives, and particularly due to ‘the polychronic nature of special places in the landscape as well as their percolations through time that still influence the activities of the present’ (Lymer, 2010). This theory captures the scenes unfolding at Celtic New Year annually. As in the ritualised performance of place at the *Badalisc*, these re-enactors also create such dynamic engagements representing multiple time frames. Witmore phrases it thus: ‘While the past does percolate through its material traces and memory, it can also do so through the liveness (sic) of performance and physical re-enactment’ (Witmore, 2006: 281).

The above interviews and reflections indicate that *communitas* can emerge as well as sense of place in a commercial festival, offering the kind of community re-integration that is usually found in a more traditional *festa* (like some of those reviewed here). In my three years’ experience of observing the Celtic New Year festival, I assert that it has resisted annihilation of its sense of place, despite being a city festival with a commercial and political underpinning. On the contrary, the fair has aided many different people to develop sense of place in Milan and offers a complex polychronic engagement with space. The next section examines some different aspects of multivocality that can enter into a festival heterotopia (Rodman, 2003: 211): power and national politics.

5.10 Samhain, but not Hallowe'en

There is a journey that one could call an underworld journey underlying the archaeological profile in the studies. (...) Through diverse collaborations with many areas of study and scholarship we'll hopefully manage to solve various things that are still unknown, to resolve questions about this work, through the archaeology. For example, in terms of what's known about the foundations of the city, we want to find where the burials were, to establish the exact spot of the city's founding (Elena Merlo, 23 September 2008).

The organisers of Celtic New Year, Elena Merlo and her husband Leo, are dramatic-looking personages who play the roles well of politician and celebrity-style wife. Elena has a petite figure, long pale blonde hair and a penchant for high heels, despite often having a baby on her hip or at her breast. Leo is tall and serious, with a steely glance. She and her husband have an agenda in mind for the Celtic New Year festival: among their aims expressed overtly is the hope to instil in the residents of Milan the belief that the Castle is close to, if not built precisely upon, the original location of Milan's Celtic settlement's central meeting place — their *nemeton* (Elena Merlo, 23 September 2008). Elena and Leo have the financial and political ability to promote this agenda — and any others they may less overtly hold: Elena's husband is a prominent member of the powerful Italian political party, The Northern League, *La Lega Nord*. They were gracious in accepting my request for an interview, and invited me into their home prior to the conference and festival in 2008. It was an elegant but comfortable apartment in a residential neighbourhood of Milan. Adding to the sense of hominess, their three children and enormous cat frequently interrupted our interview. Elena was eager to talk about their creation of the festival, and spoke ardently about the Castle and its grounds. She stated that it was absolutely a priority for them in choosing a place for the Celtic New Year festival.

Sense of place was fundamental and most important for us. The choice of where to hold this fair, the place to locate it, was not a casual choice. We wanted to enclose it inside what seems to be from the archaeological studies the nucleus of where ancient Milan was founded. The sense of belonging, the bonds to the origin – there couldn't have been any other place. Anyway, it had to be significant to the 'journey' – had to be part of the experience. (...) Obviously it's hard to be sure, but most (scholars) seem to be quite certain that the first

nemeton was here. Thus we have chosen the area that has deep significance to us for these re-enactments, this celebration (23 September 2008).

Thus the Castle is more than a symbol, more than a particular historical setting, and has perhaps been more active in the choice than even the organisers themselves were aware. Unbeknownst to the Pagans who themselves sense an underworld journey in the Castle festival, festival organiser Elena Merlo had alluded to this potential quality of the fair in our interviews in describing their archaeological explorations.

Elena used discourse and phrasing in describing their process of choosing how to ‘place’ the festival, where and when exactly to hold the festival, with terms that can be interpreted as spiritual or metaphysical, if not religious. Yet other participants shared with me that Elena and her husband did not show any interest in being connected with the newly visible Pagan movement and religions growing in Italy (Howell, 2008b: 14-19). As discussed above, the Pagan community of Lombardy, Piedmont, Emilia-Romagna, and other northern regions near Milan have come to see this festival as an annual reunion, whether the organisers overtly condone and support it, or not. Vendors interviewed in 2008, such as Oscar and Melissa, recounted that the organisers asserted their distance from the imported customs and commercialism of Hallowe’en. For example, in 2008 Elena, a most recognisable figure at the festival in heels and an elegant outfit, personally came to the vendors’ stalls and demanded that the orange North American-variety pumpkins or other directly Hallowe’en-related objects be put away. (Chapter six examines a festival in the Piedmont city of Omegna which instead develops the theme of pumpkins and their connection to this period of the year, even to Hallowe’en.) Their attitude is curious, as their Milan festival is called *Samonios*, the Italian translation of the pan-Celtic word for the festival at this time of year, *Samhain*, or *Samain*

(Hutton, 2007:115; Kruta, 2007:141-143). Their event is consciously timed for the end of October and entitled Celtic New Year (*Capodanno Celtico*):

It seems from the analysis of the orientation by the stars, done by archaeo-astronomers – from the way the city was laid out according to the correspondence with the rising of certain stars, those coming up then – that it could link, could position the foundation of Milan with Samhain (23 September 2008).

Our interview pursued this theme further, as she had initially brought up the Samhain connection. In terms of their choice of places, since they are in the government and could have chosen any number of places for a festival, their definitive locating was significant. Our interview returned to the theme of sense of place. Her answer was precise once more in expressing their own sense of place.

If I think of how this (project) was born, of the way this festival evolved over the years, for me the journey was in a way unforeseeable, irrational – but it was always there, at the Castle. It is the best-adapted place for Celtic Milan. It has a magic all its own; it has a deep significance for the Celtic history as well as for the later history of Milan (23 September 2008).

This festival stands out among the others studied here, not only in its size and its focus, in an urban setting, but due to another feature of its organisation — the point mentioned above that the organisers had the power and financial ability to pick from various possible locations in which to place the festival. Due to the archaeological, historical and sense of place considerations in their own minds and goals, they consciously chose the Castle and *Sempione* park. As the sections below discuss, it is likely that there were also political and commercial motivations; thus politics of place enter into the scenario as well as poetics of place.

Despite the dramatic contrast in size and setting of the two festivals described in this chapter, a similar aspect arose as both organisers interviewed, in Andrista and Milan, rejected identification of their festival with other widely-known calendrical celebrations. Both attempt to manage the timing and the calendar associations, as well as the cultural and religious associations with which ‘their’ festival is associated and could be linked. For the *Badalisc* it is

the rejection of Carnival; for Celtic New Year, it is their denial of Hallowe'en. There is a similarity in this sense of organisers manipulating the portrayal that they themselves perceive and wish to present. However, the research begs the question: at what point does the festival stop being a child and a creation of the organisers? If the sense of place is strong, if there is a space of liminality available where the voice of the Other can be heard, the community and the land itself can take over; their power, their energies, will, desires and visions may come through more strongly. Contrary to what the organisers might realise when they begin to draft the plans for an event, when they put it in motion, set it free out into the world, offer it to the community, then other forces begin to have a say and a sway in the outcomes. Italy's nineteenth century playwright Luigi Pirandello in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* depicted how an author may not be aware of what he or she has given birth to, how he or she has allowed other beings' desires, dreams, tragedies, to spring into life (Pirandello, 1948, 1977:18, 23, 36-37).

Like this thesis' metaphor of the festival as a two-way bridge, the influence of the Castle grounds' 'deep significance' may move in more than one direction. Basso (1996) has discussed this potential agency of place, Gray (2003) refers to it, and so do Grimes (2006) and Barron (2006). This thesis has illustrated how place can be an actor, not merely a backdrop. Ingold's views on the 'temporality of the landscape' are pertinent in this chapter's discussions of landscape.

... in dwelling in the world, we do not act *upon* it, or do things *to* it; rather we move along with it. Our actions do not transform the world, they are part and parcel of the world's transforming itself (Ingold, 2000: 200, italics in original).

Like the land surrounding the mountain village of Andrista, examined in the previous sections, the place where Celtic New Year's 'journey' (Elena's words) has been situated may be acting with more agency than they realise. It is interesting to try to ascertain the moment

in which we become ‘part of the world’s transforming itself’ (Ingold, 2000: 200). The festival bridge that this thesis is investigating, woven and constructed between culture and Nature, may have a certain unpredictable power; in the style of fantasy literature it may suddenly turn and weave its own way to a destination not foreseen. Elena herself said it: ‘We must remember that behind all of this there is a journey, a voyage of discovery which has been re-awakened, re-awakened in peoples’ unconscious and in their awareness’ (23 September 2008). Oscar, from a very different perspective and interviewing months separately, nevertheless spoke in exactly the same way of the festival (26 January 2008).

Perhaps both Lombardy festivals are, in Ingold’s terms, ‘moving along with the world’ which is progressing in its own transformation. In sacralising the place as they have done with Celtic New Year and their vision of its ‘underworld journey’; in establishing its calendrical regularity, they have caused the festival to become a ritual, and thus re-awakened profound creative processes. In line with Grimes’ or Bell’s categories of what constitutes a ritual, Celtic New Year has become a calendrical community ritual and festival; perhaps even a political ritual (Bell, 1997: 93-94).

5.11 Nationalism – the dark side of *campanilismo*

This study has demonstrated how devotion to one’s home place can be felt towards a built environment as much as to natural settings, *and* particularly to the community connected with that place. Bonds with place are not only natural, but can be healthy and restorative for a community. When a festival or ritual helps to nurture and maintain these bonds, it too can be health-inducing and offer renewal for a community (Bell, 1997: 31; Orsi, 2002: xlix; Tak, 2000: 243, 251). My work in small communities, such as that studied above in Andrista, and

that in the next chapter, Paroldo, demonstrates this aspect. There is, however, another side to fervent *campanilismo* which raises new questions: it can be ‘poisoned sense of place’, as Relph has termed it (Relph, 1997 cited in Eyles and Williams, 2008: 24). The beliefs of the organisers of Celtic New Year have had both negative and positive impacts on its development. On the positive side is their belief in the great significance of history: ‘Due to the ancient history in each region, which left its traces there, we Italians are very attached to our past and our history’ (Elena Merlo, 23 September 2008). The ‘meaningful world that they are creating’ (Knott, 2005a: 101) may have nuances some visitors overlook. On the negative side there are divisive politics embedded with the festival. Many attendees may not immediately recognise the political symbolism in the street theatre re-enacting of battles and sword-play. However, the significance of processions of armed Gallic warriors into the cathedral square of *Piazza Duomo* does not take a scholar to interpret. (Figures 14 and 15 depict this.) As this is a study with sense of place as its root, it was interesting to discover that the powerfully place-based party, the Northern League, is intertwined with Celtic New Year. Some of my participants had prepared me that there was a political thrust to the fair. Anyone doing even superficial research can easily locate the chief organiser in Milan’s government, where his name and photograph appear on the Internet along with his political affiliation. (In the years since this research began, he has taken his surname off the Celtic New Year website.) The Northern League promotes anti-immigrant philosophies as a fundamental policy; another consistent plank is harsh criticism of the national government based in Rome. Most significantly they have historically campaigned for the Northern provinces to secede from the Italian federation and form a separate state. The Northern League calls this region *Padania*, identifying itself with the arable, productive regions surrounding the Po river valley. ‘Free Padania!’ (*Padania Libera!*) is their rallying cry.

Tuan wrote on ethnocentrism in *Topophilia* and observed that it is 'a common human trait'. He reviewed the attitudes of various ancient and modern cultures versus their neighbours; for example, how the Egyptians in ancient times called themselves 'the people', as do the five racially and religiously diverse American Indian nations in New Mexico still today, indicating that those outside their culture and region are not human persons (Tuan, 1974: 31). He examines how various cultures throughout history have put themselves at the centre of the world and thus felt superior: 'The illusion of superiority and centrality is probably necessary to the sustenance of culture' (Tuan, 1974: 31). In a similar way the organisers of Celtic New Year, like the Northern League itself, wish to show the centrality and superiority of the north of Italy, of Milan, and the ancient legacy of the centre of Milan as the centre of a superior culture. Returning to Tuan's studies of the ancient world, he notes in a later chapter how the idea of the ideal city emerged. It relates to the purposes expressed by Celtic New Year, particularly in the conferences that accompany the festival.

When urbanism is traced back to its primary centers and into the distant past, we find not the marketplace or fortress, but the idea of the supernatural creation of the world. The agent is a god, a priest-king or hero; the locus of creation is the center of the world. That center is usually marked in some way. Beginning perhaps as a tribal shrine, it develops into massive and extensive ceremonial complexes... (Tuan, 1974:151).

For the purposes of this thesis and the discussion of Celtic New Year, there are a number of points which are significant about the festival's relationship with the Northern League. As a scholar of Italy my goal is to examine how it demonstrates one version of sense of place, wondering also how a political thrust could impact the festival. Power is always an important aspect in studies of place and space, as Rodman discusses, drawing on political scientists, geographers and philosophers such as Edward Said, David Harvey and many others. 'Places are not inert containers. They are politicised, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions (...) Places are socially constructed' (Rodman, 2007: 205). Tak's scholarship in southern and central Italy has kept a constant focus on intertwined issues of

power and economics regarding their influences on local ritual (Tak, 1990; 2000). To observe multiple sources of interweaving and interlocking influences on sense of place, one must not overlook the involvement of the Northern League in the Celtic New Year festival and its place.

5.11.1 The Northern League, the Celtic origins of Europe and 'Milanese-ism'

Parsons has studied the importance of historical symbols in the *Palio* of Siena in fueling the maintenance and on-going development of what he argues is a form of civil religion. When specifically relating this concept to historical local patriotism in other Italian cities, Milan tops the list (Parsons, 2004: xvii). At the basis of his study is the concept that

... 'civic' religion of medieval and renaissance Siena did not simply decline or die out, but persisted and was then absorbed and transformed into a remarkably fully developed example of 'civil' religion in modern and contemporary Siena (Parsons, 2004: xvii).

The organisers of Celtic New Year themselves feel a powerful sense of place regarding Milan and its Castle which this study reveals to be politicised sense of place, or politics of place, pointing towards symbolic evocation of civil religion. Their organised orchestration of symbols of power related to Milan's history is systematic. The Northern League's manipulation of place through the Celtic New Year festival is a bid for power, a well-financed effort dramatised through powerful symbols which strive to create perceptions of superiority over Rome and the south of Italy, as well as to any of those not Gallo-Celtic, not *from here*. This is an example of a government's efforts to develop civil religion through pride in being Milanese, of 'Milanese-ness' — to coin a phrase drawn from Siena, and Siena's evocation through the *Palio* of symbols of their former power.

Above all, it was a redefinition of their civil religion that focuses on and celebrated the concept of *senesità* – Sieneseness, the quality of being Sienese and of understanding the traditions and customs of Siena (Parsons, 2004: 60).

Tuan (1974) has discussed the evocation of power through symbolism in regards to the ideal city: 'Power is seldom expressed directly as a physical force even in the animal world. In the human world it is exercised through the recognition and acceptance of the symbols of legitimacy' (Tuan, 1974: 151). Festival organisers Leo and Elena have put dramatic and financially-demanding efforts into retraining the population's thinking in order to create a form of civil religion based on ideas of Milanese Celticity. Chidester and Linenthal's studies on American sacred spaces (1995) discuss the potential for creating, or manipulating, the interpretation of the space to become a 'mystical theology of sacred space' (Chidester and Linenthal, 1995: 17). They point out the dangers when those in power 'cover up the symbolic violence of domination or exclusion that is frequently involved in the making of sacred space' (17). Remembering Tuan's comments on the ideal city and its religiously inspired 'symbols of legitimacy', the organisers quite effectively represent Milan as an ancient centre of power, worship and superiority. The Northern League's purposes may also be to give Celticity an element of ethnocentricity and racial superiority —albeit from a mistaken view of imagined homogeneity. The Gallo-Celtic world is thought to have been extremely diverse, as Kruta himself wrote (2007: 4-8; 14-15; 237-238). The national Italian government to date has maintained its centre-right liaison with The Northern League, despite the general surprise initially at Bossi and Berlusconi finding common ground in their first alliance in 1994 (Sapelli, 1995: 196). As of early 2011 the party had largely maintained the seats gained in 2008 in both houses of the Italian Parliament, (59 deputies and 26 senators), as well as having representatives in the European Parliament. It has likewise maintained its power within Milan's city government.

In terms of religious affiliation, it is unclear from our interviews if the organisers are Catholic, as are other leaders in their party, and whether there is a spiritual basis to their purposes in the festival. It depends on one's interpretation of the phrase used a number of times in our interviews, 'underworld journey', which they expressed as an 'experience' they wished to evoke in the three day event. Elena also expressed their belief in the existence of a nearby ancient Celtic *nemeton*, and spoke of how they wanted to hold the fair on the Castle grounds because 'it was the nucleus of ancient Milan and we felt a sense of belonging there, of bonds to the origins' (23 September 2008). Their conference in 2008 — discussed further in the section below — was conceived with the purpose of showing the relationship between Samhain and the founding of Milan, as well as to explore the celestial alignments validating the date. Despite this connection in their minds to Celtic traditions taking place at the end of October, they have been loath to have any association with Hallowe'en, as their party leadership has likewise made clear. This stance could be merely a rejection of things that are imported, given that the heavily commercialised Hallowe'en is seen as an imported American custom. Umberto Bossi, the national head of the Northern League, his second in command, Angelo Alessandri, and other national figures in the party were quoted in Milan's primary newspaper, the *Corriere della Sera* in 2007, discussing not only Samhain, but also the other preChristian festivals which they openly commemorate, such as the summer and winter solstices. (The Northern League websites from local offices around northern Italy give elaborate discussions of ancient Pagan traditions, such as the solstices.) Alessandri told the *Corriere*: 'The Northern League stands at the confluence of the two traditions. However, the fact of recovering our Celticity is certainly not Neo-Paganism' (Anon, 2007). Roberto Calderoli, another Northern League leader, was quoted in the article as saying: 'Certainly the traditions of the ancient inhabitants of *Padania* have influenced us, but we remain solidly Catholic — perhaps some of the few remaining. Hallowe'en? It's just stuff to boost

merchants' sales' (Anon, 2007). These words seem to echo the beliefs and mirror the behaviours of the organisers of Celtic New Year.

In closing this discussion of politics, power and emotionally-charged symbols it is interesting to mention a visual image utilised by the party. Posters distributed widely by the Northern League in Milan, as well as exhibited on their website, show a large portrait of what appears to be a Native American in plains Indian-style headdress, with the caption: 'They suffered through immigration and now they live on reservations!' The Northern League's use of this image attempts to draw parallels between an oppressed indigenous nation (in America) with the people of northern Italy, referring to the ancient Gallo-Celtic tribes of the region. The symbolic messages utilised by the festival itself are eloquent. Photos from my 2008 fieldwork depict the impact created by Celtic New Year's daily processions, where people dressed as Gallic warriors amass and battle outside the *Duomo*, with spears, swords and other weapons.



Figure 14 - *Piazza Duomo* & Gallic re-enactors



Figure 15 - Awaiting the battle

5.11.2 'The Eyes of the Night'

The annual conference also held by the same Celtic New Year organisation is held in a spectacular Renaissance *palazzo* in one of the most elegant sections of Milan, *Piazza della Scala*, opposite the world-renowned opera house. Frescoed Renaissance *palazzi* are not common in Milan, unlike other Italian cities, due to Milan's World War II bombings. The conference held each year prior to the festival invites academics and scholars from around Italy and Europe. In 2008 the conference was joined by an elaborate (and well financed) art and archaeology exhibit, called 'The Eyes of the Night', displaying precious artefacts from Celtic civilisations in various regions of Europe. The exhibit was held inside the Castle, in its

upstairs galleries. Elena had been forthright about the fact that their goal for the exhibit was to rival that held in Venice in 1991 on Celtic culture and art, 'The Celts —The Origins of Europe'.

In my opinion it was a bit poor in the way it was done. Ours will be more complete, better organised and we'll have the same curator-archaeologist, Dr. Venceslas Kruta (23 September 2008).

I did not attend the Venice exhibit in 1991, so I cannot compare personally. However, my experience of both the conference and art exhibit in Milan in 2008 was that impressive levels of scholarship, art history and archaeology were displayed in the papers presented and in the exhibit. Both exhibit and conference had taken a turn into spirituality, exploring metaphysical symbolism and archaeo-astronomy, which according to the scholars and artefacts represented would place the ancient founding of Milan in late October. The conference's title was: 'The face of the Gods and the breath of the Cosmos — Divine iconography and cosmic symbolism in Celtic art'. A large, hard-bound volume of plates and historical text edited by Kruta accompanied the events. In 2009 the title of the Milan conference was 'The Celtic Roots of Europe' and invited many of the same scholars and archaeologists that had participated the previous year.

Like the festival itself, taking over the central park of Milan for three days, yet not requiring tickets for entrance, the details of the conference speak to the power, focus and financial background of the organisers.

5.12 Conclusions

The case study of the *Badalisc*, reviewed in Part One of this chapter, reveals the *festa* to be a liminal, heavily symbolic and ritualised annual festival which could not happen elsewhere;

which would happen ‘whether tourists were present or not’ (Parsons, 2004: 159). The *Badalisc* gives evidence of Grimes’ phenomenology of exteriorisation (Grimes, 1975: 508), showing how festival can move into an intertwined communion with place. Regarding Turner’s theories of community ritual, *communitas* does arise, despite the social dramas — or maybe due to the resolution of the disputes about the festival that my participants Patrizia and Salvatore (as well as others) described in the little village (Turner, 1982: 87; 110-111). The *Badalisc* can illustrate Ingold’s poetics of dwelling, where the residents of Andrista artfully live the heterotopia of the festival in a profound sense, allowing the world to show up in all its polychronic richness (Ingold, 2000: 26; 168; Lymer, 2010; Witmore, 2006: 280-281).

Milan is a complex society in a complex post-modern nation, yet one that Sapelli views as never having been modern. It suffers the critical urban issues typical of a city of about one million, thus becoming a kind of microcosm of the macrocosm — the macrocosms being the larger urban centres, like London, New York, Mexico City, Tokyo. With a large percentage of the population which is not native to Milan, studying sense of place in Milan could seem a quixotic quest. However, the *campanilismo* of Italian loyalties bonds people to their neighbourhoods and to the *Duomo*. The cultural trait of maintaining chains of reciprocity which move along with migratory social networks (Sapelli, 1995: 44), bonds people to their local merchants, their local coffee bar meeting place, and to such aspects of community in the otherwise alienating city-scape as those represented by a recently organised festival.

Part Two has demonstrated how Milan’s Celtic New Year also provides a bridge between Nature and culture. The festival does not offer profoundly ritualised, liminal space in the most formal sense, and though it offers community evolution and integration, it is not the

same re-integration to hometown community that a small village *festa* provides. However, regarding Bell's categories and also Grimes', there are various factors which meet the criteria of ritual, as well as there being evident *communitas* and re-integration. My ethnographic work on Celtic New Year supports the theory that it represents a ritualised festival, and shows engagement with place — including politicised engagement that approaches a form of civil religion. The land and place speak through the festival, moving in processes of expression and transformation, and humanity has moved with it. As the festival space is opened each October, sense of place ritually emerges, allowing polychronic space, multilocality, and diverse expressions of the multivocal Other to be heard.

The following chapter, Chapter six, reviews the festival fieldwork in neighbouring Piedmont, examining some similar aspects and features of the festival relationships with place, community, and Other. Chapter six also discusses another element strongly represented in Piedmont: how festival foods offer occasions for embodied sense of place where the 'situated eater' engages in 'ingesting topography' (Leynse, 2006: 129-130).

CHAPTER SIX

COMMUNITY, TRADITION, FOOD AND FESTIVALS IN PIEDMONT

Part One

People here really believe the mountains are part of their soul. It's something very spiritual (Marina Rete, fieldwork participant 20 October 2008).

6.0 Conveying relationality with place through festival and food

Having proposed that the festival can form a bridge, linking nature and culture through embodied, sense-derived experiences in the heterotopia of the festival, this chapter reveals in greater depth how food becomes a key component of that place-humanity relationship. The chapter also examines other forms of materiality and embodiment related to belonging and identity as made evident in the Piedmont fieldwork. Ingold wrote on the relationality of humanity and Nature:

The relational model, on the other hand, does not counterpose the land to its inhabitants along the axis of a dichotomy between the animate and the inanimate. A founding premise of the model is that life, rather than being an internal property of persons and things, is immanent in the relations between them. It follows that land, comprised by these relations, is itself imbued with the vitality that animates its inhabitants. The important thing is to ensure that this vitality never 'dries up' (Ingold, 2000: 149).

A festival can convey not only relationality, but with it the immanent energy and distinctiveness of place as it offers space and opportunity for a 'sense-ful' awareness of the land's energies. Food has already been shown in Andrista in Chapter five as a symbolic piece of the bridge that the festival builds. Chapter five participant Oscar Quercia, Druid leader in Lombardy and Piedmont, first expressed in interview how he sees traditional foods as a cogent way to convey sense of place to participants in his community of students. 'I feel that food brings something back to people. Food tells you, it communicates to you' (28 January 2008). This chapter examines critical theorists on foodways, uncovering how food and festival feasting are interwoven in Piedmont. It places these concepts against the backdrop of Piedmont's histories of migration, agrarian struggle and its World War II partisan Resistance

movement (Ginsborg, 2003; Sapelli, 1995: 158-163). The international organisation *Slow Food* sprang originally from Piedmont, near Paroldo in the area studied here, the *Langhe*. It enters into discussions in this chapter as it was present at some of the fieldwork feasts and events. Some philosophies and campaigns of *Slow Food* are significant here, as they recognise the importance of Sense of place and of ‘situated eating’ as an embodied experience of place and community (Leitch, 2003; Leynse, 2006).

6.1 War, farming and sense of place

Before moving into the actual interviews from the fieldwork, some cultural and historic background on the Piedmont area is helpful.

Themes of depopulation and emigration figure largely in this chapter, highlighting how a festival maintains the vitality in a place, for example in Paroldo, a depopulated rural village. Referring to Christian’s observations on depopulation in rural northern Spain, the village festival helps prevent ‘the magic’ of the rural village from ‘leaking out’ by holding population in the rural areas and fighting the lure of the city lights (Christian, 1989:40-41). Harvey wrote that ‘To destroy is to de-story’ (2004: 261). Place-centered stories emerge in festival culture, celebrating and honouring place and people. Omegna and Paroldo’s stories are being maintained both privately and publicly — by government supported organisations, individuals’ own research and small local nonprofit organisations. When one conducts ethnographic interviews in Piedmont, many participants will have farming in their recent past or in their family history; in the cases studied here, some may be small holding farmers themselves, or children of them. In Piedmont some will undoubtedly have direct experience of World War II in their families, or their own lives, and there will be a familial memory as

well as community memory of the Resistance movement (Ginsborg, 2003: 54-59; Sapelli, 1995:159-160). Emigration's notable impact in Piedmont confronts the ethnographer with stories of people transplanted, who left their homes under painful circumstances to relocate to the city; others who have struggled to maintain their homes and livelihoods in the rural areas. Thus, sense of place can express bitterness and pain, memorialised in toponyms heavy with memory: 'Remember all the named places in the hills that mark the space of accidents and tragedies' (Stewart, 1996: 148). To further the purpose here of examining how festivals and fairs, be they urban or rural, may express bonds and identification with place, as discussed earlier in the thesis, it is important to maintain or nurture awareness of the history and politics of place, for the place also speaks of its history (Basso, 1996: 56; Chidester and Linenthal, 1995: 6-8; 17-19; Stewart, 1996:137-141; 148-153). 'Bodies and places are connatural terms. They interanimate each other' (Casey, 1996: 24). Thus we are always in connection with place, but particularly where the landscape 'holds ancestral memories' (25).

The fieldwork interviews reviewed in this chapter, both part one and two, come from both urban and rural Piedmont, from people as varied as aristocrats, government employees and peasant farmers. Their contributions reveal experience and expression of the many-sided sense of place in humanity. The region discussed in this chapter, Piedmont, lies in northwestern Italy, at the foot of the mountains, (as its name implies), and contains much of the fertile plains of the Po river. It has traditionally been one of the richer regions of Italy, both in agriculture and in industry. Previous chapters have discussed Sapelli's theories on Italy's late industrialisation (1995), a phenomenon which has had far-reaching influences throughout Italy. Piedmont is a major part of Italy's 'Industrial Triangle' (Ginsborg, 2003: 214-216; 219), called this due to the significant industries in and around Turin, Piedmont's largest city. The Savoy monarchy ruled there for centuries (Cardoza, 1997, 2008: 10; 16;

A221/04; Street, 1998: 397-398), and its agricultural areas underwent agrarian reform earlier than central and southern Italy (Cardoza, 1997; 2008). Despite these reforms there is a long history of sharecropping and of small holdings, which could be termed subsistence farming. In fact in personal communications and interviews (November 2008; January 2009) people indicated that there are still today existing sharecropping arrangements in Piedmont. As in the Lombardy section, some of my participants called themselves *contadini*, peasants, or said that was their family heritage. Peasant is not a word often used in America or England to describe one's background or family heritage in a positive light — in English the term can have a negative connotation. However, beyond the implications of poverty and minimal schooling, the Italian meaning also connotes a country person's inherent understanding of Nature and simpler, quieter lifestyle. This self-reflexive description by participants was among other factors that were taken into account; it often did signal an awareness of land and Nature that long-time urban dwellers may not hold.

We turn now to direct fieldwork accounts.



Figure 16 - The *Centro Storico*, the old centre of Omegna, beside Lake Orta

6.2 *Festa* in the shadow of the saving mountains

Omegna lies on the northern edge of Piedmont, in the shadow of the pre-Alpine foothills, beside Lake Orta. Its roots are Roman and earlier; in more recent history the city had become a manufacturing centre, playing a role in Italy's late industrialisation (Sapelli, 1995:13; 63-64). The lake is not so grand as its more famous lake cousins, Lake Maggiore or Lake Como; it is smaller and, though impressive still, its mountains rise less steeply from the lake banks. Although it is close to the glamorous Lake Maggiore, being only 8 miles distant (13.1 km) at one of the closest points, Omegna is a world apart in culture and economics.

Its populations and industries declining in recent years, and the downtown growing increasingly dilapidated, in 2002-2003 Omegna began a beautification programme for the lake. The initiative began cleaning the lake waters of manufacturing-induced pollution, building bike paths and hiking trails, and so on. The local tourist office, the *Pro Loco*, (from Latin, meaning ‘for the place’), teamed up with a local teacher and *Pro Loco* volunteer, Professor Roberto Morsi, to create initiatives which support local businesses. Their vision was to draw revenue and life back to the town through attracting tourism as well as new residents. Like Morsi, others who work with the *Pro Loco* on the festivals and other projects are all volunteers; nevertheless they have continued the work for some years, designing projects to bring new life to the old city. In 2004 they founded a new October festival celebrating the local autumn harvests, the Pumpkin festival, ‘*Sagra della Zucca*’. Along with a farmer’s market (*mercato contadino*, or peasant market) which sells regional produce, cheeses, honey, wines, sausages, pastas, and other culinary products, there is a large communal outdoor meal; the festival also integrates a bit of Hallowe’en flavour by bringing in orange pumpkins, along with other foreign knick-knacks. (See Figure 17 below.) This is an example of contrasts between the rigidly local, and the obviously imported. The fair and markets all take place in the old town, under the mediaeval market porticoes, near the edge of the lake. When the tourist office decided to create the autumn festival, it partly was intended to fill the gap between the summer festivals and Christmas. Imported orange pumpkins were the choice of themes for the fair, as they are more colourful than the native green ones. More importantly perhaps, the pumpkin is widely used in northern Italian recipes, such as for pasta and risotto and as Morsi mentioned, they grow nearby. He admitted that it was attractive also to link the fair to the growing interest in the imported traditions of Hallowe’en in Italy. This last feature makes the fair appealing to children and their families as well, he and others admitted. Among their creative gastronomic ventures, Morsi and others authored a cookbook of local

recipes which uses regional, lake area ingredients, including fish from the lake (Milani et al., 2007). In his work on Siena, Parsons uses the term *Senesità* for that specific sense of what it means to be Sienese. No one used a term for 'Omegnian-ism' in the interviews; however all my participants at one point or another discussed the particular details that they believe distinguish their region from other parts of Piedmont, 'lower Piedmont' particularly. On a more universal level, *Italianità* ('Italian-ness', in essence, or the deeper meaning of being Italian), figured into Morsi's conceptions of what festivalgoers want and moreover, what they benefit from.

I first encountered Professor Morsi in 2007, when I began pilot studies on the Pumpkin festival. It was a splendid autumn day, and in the market stalls the orange of the pumpkins and produce almost seemed artificially painted to match the autumn foliage under a brilliantly blue sky. The somewhat run-down old manufacturing city looked as though it had put on its best autumn finery, and there was a quiet gaiety in the air as people milled about the market stalls in the ancient centre. I had been in touch with the *Pro Loco* offices and had located Morsi through a full time employee and fellow organiser, Marina Rete. Morsi was a tall, imposing figure, with a shaven bald head and a sonorous voice which was obviously used to calling attention in a classroom. He invited me into their busy office, as the festival got underway; entering the office, I noticed a massive pan sat in the piazza nearby awaiting the communal lunch of that Saturday. Marina is another key participant in the Omegna fieldwork. That was the first time I had met Marina, although we had had a number of phone conversations and ultimately had two formal interviews. Both Morsi and Marina are locals, born in Omegna or the nearby villages, and choosing to stay there. They both are fervent in their beliefs about what makes these festivals special and how they best can convey a sense of Omegna. Ideas underscored by Leynse from her fieldwork (2006), such as the embodied

sense of place that local foods convey, the ‘situated eating’ described and communally-gained sense of identity from eating traditionally prepared, local products all were very clear in Marina Rete’s and Roberto Morsi’s descriptions of Omegna’s festivals.



Figure 17 - Market stalls for the Pumpkin festival, with a mix of local and foreign goods

Morsi used the term *Italianità* — ‘Italianness’ one might translate it — in discussing the immigrant groups now populating Omegna from other nations and continents. He said in our second interview in February 2009 that the Africans who came there, such as the Senegalese, would understand ‘the magical feeling we have’, referring to the Omegna natives’ love of their lake and mountains. It was interesting that of all the many immigrant groups now present in Omegna he singled out Africans as understanding the Italian attachment to place. Without

having delved deeper into this with him, my thinking was that he felt the Africans — in a grand generalisation — might be closer to Nature and to understanding their spiritual bonds with family and Nature. When Marina interviewed on these themes, as the quote taken from our interviews at the head of this chapter indicates, she stressed the profound relationship locals have with the mountains and the lake. I found her depictions moving. She drew often on the intense relationality and historical associations that townspeople hold regarding the mountains and region. Marina answered the question of ‘What would you tell someone about this area, someone who really wanted to understand it?’ with the following account.

I often say to my tourists, when I am talking about the mountains here, mountains are really important here. People who come from here, they feel at one with the mountains. For old people, for example, if they look at the peak of the mountain, they can tell you what the weather will be tomorrow (20 October 2008).

(It was interesting and also somehow touching that she called the visitors ‘her tourists’.) In relation to the land, her words indicated a direct relationship as to a respected family member or helper.

During World War II, there was this big movement here, you know, the Resistance movement. The women, the wives of the Resistance were very important characters. They knew the wild mountains and were able to cross the wild mountains. Consequently they could cross into Switzerland and the Germans couldn’t find them. They crossed the mountains directly – that’s not a legend, that is true. So, you realise why people here feel that they are part of the mountains, especially the people who lived then (20 October 2008).

Unbidden, up came again the spectres of war, struggle and Resistance so poignantly omnipresent in Piedmont. In Omegna the memories hover in the toponyms, the streets and *piazze*, the ubiquitous war-related statues and memorials. Basso captures this.

Place-based thoughts about the self lead commonly to thoughts of other things – other places, other people, other times, whole networks of associations that ramify unaccountably within the expanding spheres of awareness that they themselves engender (Basso, 1999: 55).

In this festival research the Resistance movement has come up a number of times — most markedly here in Omegna and also in Cevo, which figured in the Lombardy fieldwork on the

Badalisc. Cevo was also a home of the Resistance movement and suffered atrocities committed against the townspeople which are memorialised constantly. Mario Castoro, whose interviews were discussed in Chapter five, at one point also spoke of how people from Cevo escaped on foot through the mountains from their valleys and mentioned that some of his own family had done so.

Theories such as Basso's 'interanimation' (1996) come to mind, as does Ingold's theory of the immanence and vitality of relationality with place (Ingold, 2000: 149). In Omegna the elderly walk through town, sit by the lake, drink coffee in the local bar, and look up at the mountains; perhaps they see, as Marina recounted, how the weather will change tomorrow, where they loved to gather chestnuts; or maybe they remember the ancient paths there that led them or their loved ones to safety. If they send a thought of gratitude to the mountains, perhaps the vitality returns, softly, infinitesimally, to the land. The 'expanding sphere of awareness' cannot be entirely measured and understood, but such awareness of the 'networks of associations' may be healing and reinforcing to all present. This ethnographic inquiry demonstrates, in a Piedmontese example, how history can be said to live on in the land. Ingold has a powerful phrase for this quality.

...land is not so much a stage for the enactment of history, or a surface on which it is inscribed, as *history congealed*. And just as kinship is geography, so the lives of persons and the histories of their relationships can be traced in the textures of the land (Ingold, 2000:150, italics in original).

Having looked at details of Omegna's history and setting, as well as some of the accounts from fieldwork in Omegna, we turn now to more specific features of its annual Pumpkin festival.



Figure 18 – Autumn colours beside Lake Orta in October

6.2.1 The placeful experience of the Pumpkin festival

Marina discussed the city's goals for the festival:

...we hope to help the shops, the restaurants. It would be good to help them - you know, especially in this economic crisis. Here we really felt the impact of the arrival of big shopping malls. So we want people to rediscover the little town centres with their small shops (20 October 2008).



Figure 19 - Local produce shop in old city centre with native pumpkins (sign says 'our homegrown pumpkins')

Marina's views echo Leynse's (2006) findings in France as well as the (Piedmontese) *Slow Food* organisation's goals of resisting globalisation through promotion of local foods. In the age of meat-borne diseases, consumers in Europe want to know the source of their food, including their meats. Eating locally is seen as related to the wellbeing not only of the town and region, but also to the health of the individual consumer (Leynse, 2006: 133; 137; 147-148). Leynse discovered that in France resisting 'Europeanisation' can be linked in consumers' minds to resisting disease through knowing your butcher, your local family producers and your grocer — all important features of sourcing one's foods. Marina discussed these values in Omegna

For example I go in and buy in the small shops. I go to the butcher in the small shops, I want to buy cheese and so I go to the family shop. We want the tourists to know these shops and businesses too. People ask me about them! I can tell they want to discover how to shop at the small family businesses. We want them to help each other. And that way we can help the centre of the small town live again (20 October 2008).

Leynse wrote regarding France

In the wake of food scares in France (including listeria and BSE, or 'mad cow') and the spectre of genetically modified foods arriving in France, people in France became concerned and many started to talk of '*la traçabilité*' (traceability). In other words, people wanted to know where exactly their food was coming from and wanted this information listed on product labels (2006: 147).

As in France, this study has demonstrated the importance to an Italian consumer of *rintracciabilità*, the ability to trace or track one's food to the origin. The concept is advertised widely on food products in Italy. However, it is important to note here that this ability to track one's foods is not simply a form of sleuthing the health of the products one consumes. Rather it is a form of relationality for Italian consumers. Marina spoke of this belief in the interviews. My neighbours, family and friends in Italy often commented on how they spent extra time to go to the producers themselves, or bought from the butcher they trusted since they knew where the farms were and knew the source. Even in London Italian friends bring their own olive oil, cheeses and so on from their home place in Italy in order to 'know what they are getting'. It is not merely careful consuming, it is about relationships and trust which are specific to place: sense of place in food consumption.

There is, as Casey wrote, a sensuousness to living intertwined with place and allowing ourselves to sense place fully, in an embodied way: 'Not only is the sensuous senseful, it is also placeful' (Casey, 1996: 19). Omegna is an example of a festival offering placeful awareness through local foods, local crafts, local folklore, and through the cultural ritual of communal eating. A group of participants in the spontaneous interviews at the fair in 2008

themselves were from Arona and Maggiore, and they had the opinion that Omegna was both striking and full of authentic sense of place.

The pumpkin is just an excuse to come! As far as sense of place, oh yes! Without a doubt this *sagra* expresses sense of place because the fair is so full of their traditions. It helps people to have a sense of them. Maggiore is very different – for one thing the valleys don't come down so steeply to the water there. The vistas are different and so are the fairs there (26 October 2008).

In this group's manner of discussing the lake, the mountains, the fish, contrasting Orta with their own home of Lake Maggiore, the vibrancy of their sense of place was tangible. This same group of older visitors knew in detail about the fish stocks in the lake; they explained carefully how the cleaning process had oxygenated and purified the lake so that the freshwater species — which they knew by name — had been revitalised and made edible again.

The next group I spoke to, beside the lake, among the stands of produce, had bags of chestnuts in hand. They had come to gather chestnuts in a secret place they knew of, above the lake, and were now exploring the fair's produce and products. Chestnuts are more than an isolated addendum to diet in northern Italy, more than an evocative sensory detail in an autumn festival. They were a staple for centuries for northern Italians, and particularly in the deprivation of the war years. This group lived in Milan, but had come for the chestnuts and the festival. Regarding sense of place, their impressions were that they felt 'more comfortable here than in Milan and found the town very evocative and picturesque' (26 October 2009). They came each year they said, to gather chestnuts and eat the local food. Witmore theorised that in our work, be it archaeological, or ethnographic, we must overcome our society's propensity for 'ocularcentrism' in order to allow other senses to add to the story of place and relationship (Witmore, 2006). Citing Latour and Foucault among others, Witmore advocates 'a turn to the ear' to combat Western ocularcentrism (Foucault, 1994: 43; 1995; Latour, 1986,

inter alia cited in Witmore, 2006: 268, 282). While this is certainly needed, as the mammals that we are it will enhance our life and our work never to neglect the powerful messages of the olfactory as well. In Piedmont, north or south, the autumnal aromas of roasting chestnuts that waft from every piazza and harvest fair evoke a meaningful placefulness that has nuanced weight. In other parts of Piedmont, such as the *Langhe* in the next section, the scent of truffles is also intertwined with autumn.

Of the sixteen people, approximately, with whom spontaneous interviews were conducted, on the street or in the festival, only one family did not feel that the Pumpkin festival expresses Omegna's true sense of place (26 October 2008). Interestingly, despite having said that, this same family had come for the food, that year as in past years. While we talked they were encouraging their little son to eat a traditional dish of the area and the fair: polenta with donkey meat. The mother, who is a medical doctor, said they loved horse or donkey meat and commented on how she believed it was good for children, due to its high protein content. As these were people whom we knew from Milan, encountered there unexpectedly, it was evident to me that there may have been a religious component to their opinions on the festival. They said that they believed that Omegna's patron saint's day in August, Saint Vito, was more 'authentic and heart-felt'. The wife in particular said that this is a very religious area, and thus Saint Vito is much more significant. They felt the pumpkin festival was too commercial. However, they were the only ones in my sampling who felt that way, and in fact a few people explicitly contradicted those opinions, saying that Saint Vito was the commercialised one, that it had lost its true sense of place due to its enormous size now. (This was similar to the criticisms of the Saint Ambrose fair in Milan, Milan's patron saint festival.) Some shared their views in interviews that Omegna was traditionally a leftwing town, and therefore not a typically religious area.

The dishes observed in the fieldwork over three years have changed somewhat. Dishes offered have included: polenta with frogs; polenta with snails; polenta with donkey; plain polenta or with a strongly flavored local cheese; risotto with pumpkin; pasta with pumpkin. With the meal ticket one receives bread, wine or water or a soft drink. Three different years we sat outside in the piazza on long picnic tables and ate alongside the locals and also a number of tourists, including a few foreign ones. Despite the chaotic crowding as people got their food, when it came to finding seats people were warm and inclusive. Like other festival meals, the shared dining experience was welcoming. We were the only English speakers we heard in three years but for a small group of British tourists one year; the market vendors were very surprised to meet Americans, and said we were the only ones who had ever come, to their knowledge.

6.2.2 *La Nigogliotta*

To appreciate the sense of place of the Pumpkin festival, it is important to recognise the symbolism of the massive pan in which the community dinners are cooked. There is an interesting materiality in the town relationship to the pan, which has a name and is practically a local personality. She is called (in Italian the word for pan is feminine) the *Nigogliotta*. (See figure 20 below.) According to Marina, this is derived from eliding two terms, *ghiotteria*, meaning greediness or gluttony, or less negatively, big appetite or big eater, with the name of their local river, the *Nigolia* — hence *La Nigogliotta*. This notable pan is used both for the Pumpkin festival and also for Carnival. In this way people indulging in the sensory delights of local food, traditional local recipes, cooked by locals beside the lake — or sometimes *on* the lake — eat something prepared in the town's celebrated pan *Nigogliotta*. A

quintessentially Italian form of experience, this conveys sense of place in Omegna in a concretely sense-oriented manner where memory, senses, conviviality and specificity of place all combine.



Figure 20 - *La Nigogliotta*, the huge pan for risotto or polenta, named after the river

6.3 Carnival and the King and Queen *Nigoglia* return

In the frosts and snows of late January or early February, as Carnival season arrives, Omegna has a weeklong celebration. There are both children's and adults' celebrations, parties, parades and feasts, private and public. I returned for Carnival in Omegna for two years to observe the opening ceremony, when the keys of the city are delivered formally to the Carnival King and Queen of the City. At the communal lakeside feast polenta, risotto and

other local dishes, utilising local recipes (such as those from Roberto Morsi's cook book) are prepared once more in the enormous pan. Some years a truly grand symbol of Omegnian sense of place — and perhaps of place agency — is enacted: the *ProLoco* builds a kind of stage for the pan on a platform over the water, and so the dishes for the communal dinners are cooked literally on the lake. The King and Queen of Omegna's Carnival are examples of embodiment and interanimation between humanity, ritual and place: the characters are named after the river, the Nigoglia, and often arrive from the lake by boat. (See figure 21). Local people play the personages that personify the river. They are dressed in character, and are attended by a 'courtier'; all take their roles quite seriously. According to the interviews conducted spontaneously at the opening of Carnival in 2008 and 2009, they perform this 'duty' all through the week before Lent begins. Their duties include visiting schools, hospitals, homes for the elderly, offices, and so on. The River Royals also 'officiate' at parties and dances that are held in the town in honour of Carnival. My research indicates that this is a tradition that hails from at least the early twentieth century (Lo Strona, 1979: 44); the local tourism office believes it has run in continuity since the 1880's. One of the fieldwork participants, Ronno Betulla, is the local librarian; he stated in our January 2009 interviews that it is a typical component of Carnival in Italy's northern regions to have a man and woman character, often said to be the local 'royalty', visiting the town during Carnival.

The Nigoglia flows against the norm in flowing north, an aspect of the landscape which is mentioned frequently by Omegnians, and is meaningful to the local people. The river's unconventional direction is written up in local lore in a rhyme with political overtones: *La Nigoglia va all'insu', e la legge la facciamo noi!* That is the Italian version; it rhymes in the local dialect, and means: 'The Nigoglia goes upwards, and we make the law' (Lo Strona, 1981: 3). Thus the Royal masques dually embody a form of traditional Carnival reversal

(Bakhtin, 1984): they are commoners, average locals, portraying ‘aristocracy’. Ronno was aware of this symbolism and pointed out their honouring of a Carnival reversal tradition (30 January 2009). In 2009 the people engaged in this performance told me: ‘We now have a Queen of colour, like you in America with Obama!’ They had specifically chosen a minority person and recent immigrant to Omegna, to symbolise the waves of immigrants who have arrived from all areas of the globe and of Italy for the industries there. (Morsi told me they wanted an African immigrant, but could not find one to play the Queen; consequently they invited an Ecuadorean woman to play the Queen. (See Figure 22).) When asked about it, Marina had exclaimed enthusiastically: ‘They are the only Royals we want!’ Various participants in the interviews mentioned the traditional leftwing political bent of the town, and peoples’ comments about the Royals were in keeping with that aspect of Omegna history.



Figure 21 - King and Queen Nigoglia sail in to open up Carnival season, Feb. 2008

The two festival mornings I attended, a handful of locals watched the hand-over of the keys of the city, accompanied by lively groups of schoolchildren in costume. Speaking to some of the observers in the old city's main square they told me that these were new portrayals of old customs. Two elderly women said they remembered Carnival from their childhood and that it was a welcome 'breath of fresh air' in the middle of the winter. Upon being asked what she felt expresses Omegna's sense of place best, one of the elderly women said with great enthusiasm in her voice and eyes that it is the lake itself, with its remarkable colours. She felt that the colours are different there, and exclaimed: 'I'm in love with my town and with our lake!' Three middle-aged men standing nearby said they enjoyed the Carnival weekend parties and parades with costuming and floats, and that they had always brought their families down to the lakeside for Carnival. Two of them agreed that the big pan, *La Nigogliotta*, was an important feature and liked it very much. However, they all seemed to think that Carnival was not as 'felt', not as important to people any more as other festivals. They liked the Pumpkin festival very much and felt it expressed the sense of place of Omegna very well — more than Carnival, in these men's opinions.

These two autumn and winter festivals express immanent energies and memories stored in the land. While they do not offer the kind of heterotopic liminality and polychronic temporality of other festivals, the agency of the lake and mountains 'percolates' through the events clearly. Now we look at other symbolism in foodways expressing sense of place and identity in Omegna.



Figure 22 - King and new Queen Nigoglia '09, with courtier/guard and Omegna's mayor, handing over 'keys to the city'

6.4 Multiple symbols in food, wine and communal meals

The now international *Slow Food* organisation, its symbol a snail, began in Piedmont. Its headquarters is in the *Langhe* region, at Bra (the region discussed next in Chapter six part two). Its founders wrote in their 'manifesto':

Our defense should begin at the table with *Slow Food*. Let us rediscover the flavors and savors of regional cooking and banish the degrading effects of *Fast Food*. (...) *Slow Food* guarantees a better future (Portinari, 1989).

Defence, banishing degradation, guaranteeing the future: these are unusual promises from a culinary organisation. However, *Slow Food* is much more than a culinary organisation — its campaigns are now global and expanding into all areas of media and publishing. In addition,

one must consider the history of invasion and subsequent rulership by the French monarchy in Piedmont, along with other factors of the political history that together have given the region a distinctive identity, attitude and philosophy (Cardoza, 1997: 10; 16; 47-48; A221/04; Leitch, 2003: 449). Piedmont's foods reflect its history and geography.

This geographical proximity is reflected in similar methods of food production and culinary traditions influenced by French and Swiss cuisines. The cooks of Valle d'Aosta and Piemonte (...) use mushrooms, truffles, berries and nuts foraged on the southern mountain slopes (Katz and Weaver, 2003: 301).

Orsi makes clear how deeply embedded the sacredness of home, the *domus*, and the value of eating together is for Italians and Italian-Americans in his studies of New York City; Cinotto has discussed this in Italian immigrant culture as well. Specific practices in regards to food preparation, eating, and familial or communal dining are fundamental in all of Italian culture (Cinotto, 2001: 29-33; Katz and Weaver, 2003: 311; Orsi, 2002: 172-173). Roberto Morsi interpreted the religious symbolism of a sacrament taking place through the festival sharing of food, similar to the absolution that Orsi discusses in relation to the Madonna *festa* in Harlem. This phenomenon surfaces in Italian as well as Italian-American culture, where the 'bridging' of the nature-humanity gulf comes through the consumption of local foods, in traditional manners, with familial recipes. This was described in a notable fashion by the participants who spoke of the healing power of food, particularly when eaten together. Morsi said in our first interview:

The purpose of the *sagra* is to be united once more, to collaborate and connect deeply with the Italian spirit. We all sin every day, even though we have the desire for sanctity (20 October 2007).

With this Morsi implied that sitting down together in a festival communal meal helped participants to find greater sanctity. Oscar Quercia, Druid leader who interviewed at *Capodanno Celtico* discussed in Chapter five, lives and works in Piedmont as well. He often

creates and leads festivals there as well as communal feasts for the Druidic community. Oscar commented on the spiritual quality of dining in company:

In Italy there is this great affection for eating together, for being together at table. If you manage to get people to sit down together and have a dinner, we have seen that food became a ritual, a rite. (...) Food brings something back to people. Food speaks to you, it communicates. You see how people react. Therefore, eating the foods of a place all together is a form of communication with the food and the place (26 January 2008).

These participants, as Orsi (2002) wrote in his studies of Harlem, see spiritual gifts in the communal re-integration that the festival can bestow.

Other kinds of symbolism arise in such meals, as Leynse observed in France.

Food-festivals are particularly suited to this task as they often combine nostalgia for 'simpler' days with entertaining, convivial community gatherings. The overall ambiance lends itself to an enjoyable performance and experience of a given locale, and is, thus, an excellent site for socialization of place-based food habits and an overall sense of place (Leynse, 2006: 148).

Her work in the Loire valley, observes how local bread, wine, strawberries, mushrooms, and so forth, become 'another example of a food with a specifically local, symbolic value' (2006: 149). There is surely 'local, symbolic value' with a placeful emotional charge in many foods. It is important to the fieldworker or observer to divine *what* the food symbolises in order to clearly interpret the sense of place being conveyed. It may be a simpler, less-polluted time in the world, as Leynse hypothesises about nostalgia in 'Loireville'; or it may evoke a socially or psychologically-healthier era of close family bonds and family meals, meanings that my participants imparted to their communal festival meals. *Slow Food* strives to combine the symbolism of overall health of 'mind-body-spirit', with the practice of eating slowly and in community with others (Andrews, 2008: 41-42; 171; 177-178; Leitch, 2003: 452-454). It became evident that my fieldwork participants shared this ethos as well.

However, among the symbols and memories conveyed to some there may also be memories of hunger, grindingly hard work and of poverty. Casey writes in Feld and Basso (1996) that we are always embodied and situated through our bodies in place, and through our senses (1996: 19); therefore memories arriving through the experience of ‘sense memory’ may be of any genre or flavour (sense memory is also the name for a theatrical acting technique (Morris and Hotchkis, 1977, 1979: 79-83).) Sense of place is not always sweetly reminiscent, romantic or positive. Paroldo participant Veronica Valle reminded me of that in our interviews, calling the sanitised, idealised memories that some prefer to convey ‘tourist postcards’ about Italy (26 April 2009).

6.4.1 Ethics, identity and situated eating

There exists a complex and nuanced relationship among food choices, identity and ethics in Italy. Leitch (2003) discusses this correlation in regards to *Slow Food* and its involvement with artisanal pork fat, or *lardo*, producers in Tuscany. Participants in my northern Italian fieldwork 2007- 2009 echo Leitch’s findings (2003), as well as what Leynse (2006) learned from her study’s participants in France. ‘Eating locally (...) was a way for people to ‘situate’ themselves based on ethics’ (Leynse, 2006: 148). Situating oneself through eating is a deeply ingrained and embedded custom and value in Italy, and thus when *campanilismo* is wedded to what Cinotto (2001) calls ‘the cult of cooking, or of the kitchen’ and ‘the cult of the family’ (2001: 31), we find powerful motivators and attractions for a festival, for sense of place and for proposed continuity of tradition. Morsi and colleagues’ cookbook of Lake Orta recipes was a creative initiative to sponsor greater bonds with the town and lake.

There arises a positive association of food choices and localised eating with ethics and identity which Leynse underscored in her research in France, and which also came through in my fieldwork in Italy.

...anthropologists are now turning their attention to ways that food habits can anchor a collective identity in relation to specificities of place. As eating is often a social experience, food habits and memories of specific dining/tasting experiences in particular places, using particular ingredients and production/preparation techniques can be used to build or maintain community through the development of collective memory (Sutton, 2001 cited in Leynse, 2006: 132).

The ethical values imparted derive from goals of resistance, both ideological and psychological. Communities seek to resist globalisation on a macro level, and alienation on the more personal level, finding these benefits through locally-derived choices in food.

By imbuing locales and local products with extra ideological and affective value, people marked them as revered or sacred – perceived, at least, as safer and morally preferable. Eating locally, in effect, was a way for people to ‘situate’ themselves based on ethics (Leynse, 2006: 148).

These concepts are reiterated by Leitch in her study of *Slow Food*’s impact on certain communities’ traditional foods in Tuscany, (Leitch, 2003). She quotes from Carlo Petrini

Through Slow Food, which is against the homogenizing effects of fast foods, we are rediscovering the rich variety of tastes and smells of local cuisine. And it is here, in developing an appreciation for these tastes that we will be able to rediscover the meaning of culture, which will grow through the international exchange of stories, knowledge and other projects (Leitch, 2003: 455).

The idea of being situated through food choices, through knowledge of where one’s food comes from, and of deriving a ‘collective identity’ through eating habits, is an uncommon approach to the concept of relational epistemology (Ingold, 2000; Knott, 2005). It exemplifies another form of the relational model of dwelling which aids humanity in building new or healing damaged bonds with place and with each other. Like the French in Leynse’ observations, the Italians interviewed here at food-related festivals, *sagre* and *fiere*, (another name in Italy for a festival which is not primarily religious and is more gastronomic or cultural) find both a sense of identity and of place through the local foods and traditional

recipes (or those perceived as traditional). As mentioned earlier in section 6.2.1, people were concerned to know that the cheeses, wines, truffles, pastas or breads, and so forth were both local and handmade, or made as at home. *Artigianale* or *fatto in casa* (artisanal, or home made) were common labels attached to various foods. Even meats have the specific farm, location and names attached to them — including place and date of slaughter. The maintenance of chains of reciprocity and relationship within a town or village is strengthened by food choices in France.

...people I interviewed in Loireville felt it was very important to know where their food came from. (...) many preferred to develop relationships with local butchers and food producers. They felt they could trust them and felt reassured by this. In addition many shopped at local farmers' markets and used personal connections (family, friends, friends of family, etc.) to obtain foods directly from area producers (Leynse, 2006: 148).

My own experiences in Italy, both as a resident and as a researcher, also found consistent evidence of these practices. Sapelli's observations on post-war Italy's process of 'ruralization of the cities' (1995: 43) was evidenced in Piedmont, where millions of rural people poured into the Industrial Triangle from all over Italy, not only from the neighbouring northern farm areas (Ginsborg, 2003:210-219; Sapelli, 1995: 44-48), bringing with them traditional mores and values. This had an influence on mores regarding food as well as on consumer habits and on eating, as Cinotto (2001) has observed in Italian-American communities in America. In Italy maintaining one's chains of relationality is of primary importance, whether as a food choice, an ethical or other choice; Sapelli's work has likewise underscored this point. To echo Latour, the 'networks remain local' (Latour, 1993: 117-120).

The foods at Carnival and at the Pumpkin festival, cooked on or beside the lake, represent the region. Petrini has illustrated with *Slow Food's* campaigns how food, like the land it comes from, 'congeals history' (Ingold, 2000: 150). Certain recipes have political overtones as well

as historic. Omegna's dishes such as donkey stew and frogs with rice or polenta are a traditional part of the *festa* menu. Deer meat, wild boar and other game items are often included too, as are fish dishes from the lake itself. These are not so typically from this region and could as easily originate in Tuscany or Liguria as well as Piedmont. A dish that is symbolic and traditional in this northern area, from the accounts of people interviewed, is donkey meat prepared in various forms. It is a favourite dish, or favourite purchase at the farm stands. (We already heard about donkey sausages in the mountain area of Lombardy in Chapter five.) Unappealing as donkey meat, snails or fried frogs may be to some non-Italian palates, such local peasant food can symbolise survival and forbearance to those who lived through Piedmont's times of scarcity. Marina mentioned in our interview when asked about the frogs that country people had always had a custom of going out to catch frogs in the many streams and marshes of Piedmont and thus held childhood memories of eating them. The widely consumed northern Italian dishes using chestnuts and polenta also carry such weighted and nuanced meanings.

Politics can never be left out of consideration in Italy; Leitch (2003) wrote on the politics of traditional foods in Italy, such as pork fat. She compares some of the work of *Slow Food's* Petrini to the messages conveyed fictionally by novelist Milan Kundera. Kundera advocated slowness and contemplation not only as an antidote to the incivility of hectic postmodern urban life, but actually as a political philosophy.

Kundera's novel is not just a philosophical discussion on speed and modernity, or slowness and its relationship to memory. It is also a literary treatise on Europe and the nature of Europeanism. The book plays with a series of European symbols to ask questions about what kind of place Europe might become. (...) Like Kundera, Carlo Petrini is also interested in socially productive excavations of the past. Both are concerned with the erasure of sensorial memory under modernity (Leitch, 2003: 453-454).

‘Socially productive excavations of the past... concerned with [preventing] the erasure of sensorial memory under modernity’ is an apt phrase to express some of the goals sought by the festivals examined here. The festival activities become buffers against homogenisation or protection from the destructive effects of globalisation; this is a boon that increasing sense of place can offer a community. Along with the goals previously seen in this thesis of political or cultural identity, of civil religion, the creation of a festival may arise from the goal of recreating and retaining memory, from a vision of instilling a ‘practice of remembering, embedded in the perception of the environment’ (Ingold, 2000: 148). Maintaining collective memory, collective history, helps to garner awareness of the land’s agency where the land itself gathers us in. However, this awareness becomes increasingly difficult under the mounting pressures of post-modernity and post-industrialisation. Slow Food endeavours to honour memory and bio-regional food awareness in all the areas in which it has now grown up, spreading out from Piedmont. Part two on the *Langhe* discusses more on this.

6.5 Conclusion

A key to the final analysis emerged in the Omegna interviews: sense of place is both individual and communal, personally held and community held. It can be nurtured and created through experiences shared in common, which is what many of the organisers interviewed here seek. This discussion of the values imparted to food and to eating local foods, particularly in communal settings, demonstrates the deeply embedded significance that foodways have in Italy. Food and festival feasting take on ritual symbolism, and render a ‘placeful’ (Casey, 1996: 19) embodiment of land and home through multiple nuanced components.

Carnival in Omegna echoes one of Parsons' observations on Siena's *Palio*: the residents of Omegna would enact the ceremony of bestowing the keys of the city on the costumed King and Queen 'whether tourists were present or not' (Parsons, 2004:157). In the sense of Omegna celebrating itself and its own identity, the Carnival delivers an annual opportunity for 'meaning-making' (Knott, 2005: 100-101) to its residents, as Omegna's festival participants ingest topography and become situated eaters (Leynse, 2006). The Pumpkin festival and Carnival clearly convey local bonds with place and a dwelling perspective. In the festival heterotopia the bridge to place is constructed symbolically and in direct embodiment — talking, celebrating, cooking and eating together, using regional recipes, all in view of the mountains and lake. This perspective is relational, engaging energies immanent in the land itself (Ingold, 2000: 148), bridging the perceived gap between place and humanity.

We have seen here how diverse Others are acknowledged and integrated into community in Omegna's festival time. The focus moves now to 'lower' Piedmont's rural *Langhe* region, and to further explorations of embodying, ingesting and performing place.

CHAPTER SIX

PIEDMONT

Part Two

Our ancient ancestors lived amidst the beech trees, and were named after them. So, we are the people of the beeches (Raffaello Salice, fieldwork participant, 21 June 2008).

6.6 *Le Langhe*

The next area studied in this chapter is the rural southwestern region of Piedmont called the *Langhe*. To set the scene, here is some specific background on this area.

Piedmont's eastern plains and fertile Po valley have traditionally been home to Italy's large scale rice production, begun in the nineteenth century; however, the hill country of the *Langhe* region is poorer, drier and more difficult to till. One of the Paroldo case study's important participants, Raffaello Salice, is a native to the *Langhe* and a folklorist there; he calls the *Langhe* 'a desert' (21 June 2008). He used the term to refer to both depopulation and water scarcity. Other interviewees confirmed that the water sources are shallow and sparse. As Open University course materials filmed in tandem with the BBC describe, the *Langhe* was mostly 'a region of small holdings... known for the wood it produced for construction and farm implements, and for the excellence of its cattle' (A221/04). Broers paints a picture of how difficult subsistence farming was in the *Langhe*: 'What peasants could do with their land was limited. What they aimed to do first and foremost was feed themselves and pay their rent' (A221/04).

Providing another dimension of sense of place and the stories gathered in the district of the *Langhe* is its rich literary history. Leitch (2003) mentions this in her study of *Slow Food*, marble quarry workers and artisanal food producers.

Made famous in the literature of distinguished literary figures such as Cesare Pavese, the area surrounding the city (is) known as *Le Langhe* (and) is also acclaimed for its fine quality agricultural produce, truffles, and for the production of one of Italy's most prestigious wines, *Barolo* (Leitch, 2003: 449).

One cannot work in the *Langhe* region, speak to locals, conduct a study on the place, without encountering the names of literary luminaries such as Beppe Fenoglio, Nuto Revelli, Cesare Pavese, Carlo Levi, and in the area of photography, Aldo Agnelli, a colleague and friend of Fenoglio's. These writers and artists have helped to keep alive precious memories and outstanding stories of people otherwise forgotten by time and the on-rushing century. Their subjects are people such as peasant farmers, partisan resistance fighters, anti-Fascists forced into internal exile and many others who generally are not celebrated. Nuto Revelli's encyclopaedic endeavour of interviewing hundreds of peasant farmers over decades is a precious ethnographic archive. Beppe Fenoglio's semi-autobiographical account of his own partisan years, *Partisan Johnny*, (Fenoglio, 1995; 1968) is a moving account, capturing and 'congealing history' in Piedmont (Ingold, 2000:150) for the reader. Carlo Levi was a painter as well as a medical doctor and renowned writer. Of the list given above of southern Piedmont's and in particular the *Langhe*'s literary figures, only Aldo Agnelli was still alive when I was carrying out my fieldwork in Piedmont. I encountered him, in Paroldo in 2008; though elderly and blind, he was still passionate about the messages he wished to impart to the world about the *Langhe* and about Nature. The *Langhe* fieldwork participants frequently referred to these men, and their pride in this literary and artistic heritage was very evident. Besides a typical national or regional pride, their pleasure derived from knowing that their stories were acknowledged, celebrated and memorialised. As Paroldo participants, such as Veronica, Lorenzo, Raffaello and others spoke to me of these writers, of the current

documentaries made on Piedmont and of Agnelli's photos, they indicated that their Piedmont history, often of pain, hunger and suffering, had been ennobled by the cultural remembrance. Through this they, their stories and the land's stories had been re-membered (Stewart, 1996:148-150).

6.7 Witches/healers and place dialogues in Paroldo

Each November in the tiny rural hamlet of Paroldo a multi-faceted and nuanced community ritual occurs. The harvest festival of 'The Summer of Saint Martin' is a three day event which fills the village with life once more, filling the visitor's senses with a symphony of placeful elements in a gaily traditional celebration of autumn. The festival fulfils three of Bell's six categories of a ritual: it is calendrical and commemorative, and it involves feasting and communal festival (Bell, 1997: 94). The fair is named for one of the village's patron saints, Saint Martin of Tours, as is the Baroque church standing on one of the hillsides overlooking the village. The saint is typically depicted as in the design on the fair's poster, (shown in figure 24), with his donkey, staff and cloak. Martin of Tours, from the fourth century CE in Gaul, is known in Catholic legend for having given his cloak to a beggar, who then appeared in a dream as Jesus himself. The ironies of this association are discussed further below.

Little Paroldo can be perceived as a place of mystery and of hidden magic. It could be seen as a place that time forgot, a tiny village amidst rolling hills and forests that no one pays attention to — and one that is rapidly emptying. However, some years ago local inhabitants launched a small campaign to bring life back into the little village. Amateur folklorists and historians from the area began to study Paroldo traditions telling of a magic circle of

protection laid around the village, created by the village's traditional witch/healers in centuries past, its *masche* (Salvetti, 2004; Salice, 2008; other local interviews, 2008). *Masche* is a regional dialect word for witch or folk healer, male or female; it is used in this region, but not even on the other side of Piedmont — I had asked about it in Omegna when at the Pumpkin fair. The folk beliefs about the circle of protection are related to the stone faces mentioned below, which are carved onto the two village churches — one on each. (See figure 23.)

Like the festival in Milan, there is a conference held to coincide with Saint Martin's festival — but unlike Milan, it is a small event in a non-descript tourist office building. The topics discussed are widely varied, but all are local in context: the range is from the area's geology to the history of farming or archaeology. However, also often discussed are the proudly commemorated *masche*. Thus the conference as well as the festival poses a juxtaposition of Christian and non-Christian, traditional and alternative: amidst the farm stands, chestnut-roasting fires, hay rides in horse or mule drawn carriages and craft displays, there are also posters and signs for the local non profit organisation, *Le Masche di Paroldo*, The Witches/healers of Paroldo. One of the participants in the fieldwork, Raffaello, is writer of two books on the subject. He has written up various legends and personages involved with Paroldo's popular religion traditions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; his efforts have inspired other books from fellow local folklorists and historians, nonprofit organisations, conferences and has brought a farm life museum to Paroldo. Due to Raffaello and his small nonprofit organisation's efforts, the village sign at the outskirts of town announces in local Piedmont dialect, *Pais dër Masche*, village of the witches. I first met Raffaello when I had read his first book and planned to come to the Saint Martin festival in 2007. We spoke by telephone a number of times, and had two formal interviews, as well as other informal festival

visits. He is a slight man with sparkling eyes and a well-clipped short beard. He was born in one of the oldest houses in the central area of the village, which is now a restaurant run by his sister and brother. In fact it is the only official business in the village.



Figure 23 - Sign at outskirts of village, ‘Village of the witches/healers’

Raffaello, his wife and children now live and work in the larger city nearby of Bra. Nevertheless, his passionate feeling for his hometown is obvious and his sense of place contagious when planning how to introduce a visitor to Paroldo. The quote at the opening of this chapter from Raffaello indicates the extraordinary place-centred oneness with the landscape and the ancestors that he and some of his Paroldo community feel — a camaraderie that extends even to the trees. When visitors come for an event, at harvest time, at summer solstice, or at Candlemas in February, Raffaello tries to enable them to hear the voices speaking in the landscape. He leads visitors to the loudly gurgling spring at the edge of town

to hear it 'speak', and he introduces people to massive old trees as to respected village elders. One of Raffaello's favourite activities is to take people on nighttime walks to listen to the voices emerging from the land in the quiet of the evening.

At the summer solstice in June 2008, before the dinner and celebration his organisation had put on, he described the evening walk.

After dinner we'll make some reflections upon our environment, and then we'll go to kiss an ancient chestnut tree. We'll look for the paths of the autumn truffle hunters, the *Trifolau*, and we'll see the remains of a house where fairies dwelt at one time, before returning to the forests (21 June 2008).

I asked him if he could tell me what sense of place means to him and means in Paroldo.

It means memory and a sense of belonging; it also means the ability to listen. The signals the land sends out are weak, and we need people who help us to listen to these sounds. We need people who can amplify them. We need to do this together, in the company of others, because others help us to see things we may not have seen. They help us to see that which we see everyday with different eyes and thus to realise something new about it. Sense of place for me immediately goes towards the sense of spirituality too. It has a magic, a great magic, and messages (that are) often difficult to decipher.

Raffaello's personal perspective on sense of place and the relationships of reciprocity with the land, as he explained to me in interviews, concur with Ingold.

... it is essential to look after or care for the land, to maintain in good order the relationships it embodies; only then can the land, reciprocally, continue to grow and nurture those who dwell therein (Ingold, 2000: 149).

6.7.1 Lorenzo, the *Langhe* shaman

No one who is well acquainted with Paroldo's or the *Langhe*'s folklore will have missed hearing of Lorenzo Burrasca. Lorenzo is a well-known local figure — big in stature, vocal ability, energy and reputation in the rural areas near Paroldo. We met him as we arrived in Paroldo for a first night of communal dinners in February 2008. He helped my travelling companion and me to find our way through the thick fogs that — typical of Paroldo in winter — had settled into the area. As one man performing in the piazza at Saint Martin had said: 'In Paroldo it is easy to feel the presences around you in the mists and in the woods — mysterious and haunting, but not threatening' (8 November 2008). Indeed, Lorenzo seemed to be an unearthly presence that had come out of the woods for a night, for the celebrations that night of Candlemas — or '*Imbolc*' as Raffaello called it, the second of February. (In Italian the feast is called *Candelora*, and appears in Salvetti's works on local traditions (2004, 2007).) Lorenzo claimed to be from a family descended from Sami wanderers, a nomadic family which long ago had crossed the Alps and made its way into Piedmont. He played the accordion and frame drum, and called himself a shaman. His animic relationality with Nature and the land is particularly interesting, given this thesis' focus. It was Lorenzo who together with Raffaello introduced us first to the '*Gargarota*', the talking spring of Paroldo. Lorenzo and Raffaello spoke of their relationships with the burbling spring, which they believe communicates (1-2 February 2008; Salvetti, 2004: 65). In Paroldo there is constant evidence from townsfolk for Ingold's theory that 'the animic world (is) dialogical' (2000: 114).

Lorenzo prided himself on keeping traditions and folklore alive, in particular through local songs. He sang traditional folk songs in dialect, and all were delighted to sing along with him at the various communal dinners we attended, as he accompanied himself on the accordion or

drum. He is known in the area for his association with street theatre in the neighbouring village of '*Belvedere Le Langhe*', whose mysterious parish church at one time depicted various Christian legends and Biblical stories at Easter and other liturgical feastdays. Other fieldwork participants all knew him and his work, and found his talents and life to be quite unusual and magical. Whether he could rightfully be termed a shaman, I do not pretend to know; however, Lorenzo's animic and relational epistemology was deeply interanimated with land and place in Paroldo and its environs. Although we did not have a formal interview, I had more than one long conversation with him at Imbolc and summer solstice 2008 in Paroldo, as well as a spring visit to *Belvedere Le Langhe*'s '*Micun*' rite in 2009. These conversations with Lorenzo, along with Raffaello's more formal interviews, gave testimony to the profound bonds with place evident in the *Langhe*.

6.7.2 Depopulation and the danger of commodifying place

The concern that one must keep the vitality alive in the land (Ingold, 2000) can confront residents with a two edged sword, a situation in Paroldo today. As Raffaello has discussed with me, it is a challenge is to find sustainable means of development to prevent depopulation. Raffaello is one of the various participants who spoke a number of times of the impact of depopulation on Paroldo and the *Langhe*. The nonprofit organisation he helped to create has a double purpose: to bring people back to the otherwise soon to be deserted little village, as well as to create new appreciation of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Paroldo women (and men) whose magical and healing traditions his research has uncovered. His quest to keep both the magic in the land and the people in the village brings to mind Christian's work on rapidly depopulating villages in northern Spain.

Its magic leaks out year by year. With the city as the focus for attention, the village is without hope and its ceremonies empty. Its own peculiar theatre has lost its audience (Christian, 1989:40-41).

Some years ago Paroldo would have been experiencing a situation presaging an empty village, through emigration to the cities. There still are only approximately two hundred inhabitants in the small village, and no local school or shop. The children, what children there are, still go to school in a nearby larger town. However, real estate in the area is becoming increasingly valuable and sought after, and foreign buyers are beginning to arrive, many purchasing second homes. The area's truffles, Bed and Breakfast inns and wineries are now gathering acclaim abroad. Christian's observations on Spain are twenty years old, however the situation described still fits rural Italy.

What may eventually happen to these villages, since they are blessed with a setting so beautiful, is the kind of wholesale exchange in population that has taken place between New Hampshire and Vermont, on the one hand and Boston and New York on the other. The villagers will go to work and live in the cities and well-heeled disenchanted city dwellers will take over the villages (Christian, 1989:42).

Raffaello and his colleagues in the folklore associations are striving to bring business and life to the village again, but in a sustainable manner. He was disheartened when a motorcycle racecourse was built on a nearby hilltop. The two edged sword of development had cut into Paroldo's rural peace.

Despite all of the beauty and the sense of place that we've discussed here in our hills of the High *Langhe*, despite all of that, some people constructed a motocross course here near town. It means terrible pollution of the environment, with the noise, with chemical substances; it will have a huge impact on that corner where the motocross course is. Some friends and I tried to stop it, but the majority of people in the village wanted it, and some speculators saw they could make money with the business from the motocross. Now the whole village is intersected by these loud motorcycles and ATVs (21 June 2008).

His loyalties to the human community as well as the natural were evident, as he returned to happier themes.

Therefore, the important lesson is to learn how to live together. We have to co-habit with these things – there's no other way. Fortunately they don't have competitions here, since that makes

so much noise and pollution. I say fortunately, because the great old chestnut tree doesn't live too far from the motocross.

Another local man, Andrea Faggio, likewise has a powerful sense of place and interest in the local folklore histories of the Paroldo healers. His deep connection with Paroldo led him to write his BA thesis on topics of tourism, the witch/healers and how to prevent depopulation. He describes his own sense of place as 'atavistic' and calls Paroldo his 'sweet refuge'. His interanimation with the land in Paroldo was vividly expressed in our interview: 'There is a sense of Nirvana that comes with walking on that land' (July 2008). Andrea expressed his belief that the festivals and traditions in Paroldo, such as those exhibited at the autumn fair of Saint Martin, are truly unparalleled; in his words they are 'unique and peculiar'. He described the *masche* healer women, as did another of the Paroldo participants, Piero del Faggio, as people on the edges.

The *masche* are not really witches, or not only that... but healers, with a deep knowledge of medicinal herbs, like a midwife. Fundamentally these were little places without much medical help or attention. Above all the *masca* was a solitary person, alone and marginalised (Andrea Faggio, 17 November 2008).

Paroldo's witch/healers offer another example of the unheard Other. Raffaello and his colleagues in folklore of the area are endeavouring to recover their histories and through them return a deeper sense of the history of the *Langhe* hills. Through honouring and celebrating the witch/healers with story telling, with conferences, with re-enacting the costumes and traditions of past eras, Raffaello, Lorenzo, Andrea, along with Donato Bosca, Piero del Faggio and others celebrate sense of place in Paroldo. The local organisers are not creating a commoditised value brought through truffles, wine and fine dining, but rather recovering local history in order to experience place. There is always a danger that commercialisation may

bring a commodification of land and place (Leynse, 2006: 146), or commodification of tradition and of nostalgia (Leitch, 2003: 448-452). The goals that Raffaello, Donato and others represented in their interviews are expressed well by Leynse's (2006) observation in that they aim to 'build or maintain community through the development of collective memory' (Leynse, 2006: 132). Despite organisers' best intents, it becomes a balancing act to resist commercial reification of place and avoid 'Disneyfication' (Relph, 1976: 95-101). For example *Slow Food* has brought its internationally known, politicised evocations of sense memory and cultural preservation (Andrews, 2008; Leitch, 2003) in the last few years to Paroldo. *Slow Food* executives and writers were present in February 2008 with Raffaello, Andrea, Lorenzo and a host of others at the dinner of the *Magnin*, the rural Piedmont Candlemas tradition; it was obvious they had a long time association and friendship. Time has yet to tell the outcome of that involvement, which may prove to be a positive one for Paroldo in the sense of potential cultural and gastronomic preservation. In any case, thanks to the efforts of various locals a significant narrative is emerging in this quiet corner of rural Piedmont, celebrating place, tradition, culture and remembering the Other long silenced.



Figure 24 – Local man in traditional cloak and hat, with poster announcing ‘Saint Martin’s Summer’, annual harvest fair

6.8 Cloaked materiality: wearing and sacralising place

Autumn twilights come early in November southeast of the Alps, and so the festival opens in the dark on Friday night. It is an evocative scene in the dimly lit village square as one witnesses locals (and former locals who have returned) arrive in their black cloaks with characteristic Piedmontese hats. People greet one another with kisses on each cheek, warm embraces and lingering conversations in animated groups in the square. One man in the

village square on the opening night, Aldo, was selling his homemade farm cheese, a popular Piedmont product with an unforgettably pungent odour, *Bruss*; other family members at his stand said it is also known as the '*masche* cheese'. Aldo was wearing his traditional woollen cloak; when asked of its origins he said that the family believed it was from the nineteenth century. They simply said they believed it had belonged to their great-grandfather. In our interview in 2008, Andrea gave a practical theory of why their ancestors used them — he recounted the logistical convenience of riding a horse in a cloak, which leaves one's arms free.

However, Andrea also observed that in Paroldo the cloaks are a sign of belonging: to the village, and to the organisation of the local healer/witches started by Raffaello. There is yet another layer to the meanings of the cloak: the cloak of course can symbolise their patron saint's legend, as local man Germano responded in a spontaneous interview at Saint Martin's (8 November 2008 — in figure 24 above). There is an interesting irony in this devotion at Paroldo in that Catholic tradition and hagiography credits Martin of Tours for being an ardent destroyer of Gallic Paganism and of sacred groves, *nemeton*, in fourth century Gaul (Hoch, 1987; Maynard, 1906: 229; Jones and Pennick, 1995: 81; 97-98). Nevertheless, for Germano, as for Raffaello, Donato and others in Paroldo, the juxtaposition of celebrating Christian, ancient Gallo-Celtic, Druidic and witch/healer traditions is overlooked: for them cloaks mean honouring tradition and community. By donning the cloak they wrap themselves with place: honouring the past, the ancestors, the wearer and the village itself, all in personal and nuanced forms.

The cloak offers an expressively symbolic message for participants in a festival, a symbol we saw in Chapter five. There is some similarity to the Pagans at Celtic New Year in Milan, for at Paroldo the cloaks are a commemorative symbol of a powerful, magical Other. As an actor 'puts on' a character when putting on his/her costume, internalising another's life experiences, so someone who dons a cloak takes on a new identity. In Italy the wearing of a cloak represents various nuanced meanings, usually of importance and of dignity. Bell writes in regards to academic robes:

Maintaining this garb on formal occasions despite centuries of radical sartorial change in society in general has served to heighten the contrast between the academic world and everybody else. Such distinctions foster the ethos that scholars are the custodians of timeless truths ... (Bell, 1997:146).

Bell's description of the academic gown captures one aspect of the symbolism of the cloak in both Celtic New Year and in Paroldo: both the scholar and the witch/healer are 'custodians of timeless truths'. My participants in Paroldo, individually, nearly all referenced respect for their ancestors as a reason for wearing their cloaks. For Raffaello and Donato, both men the founders of two folklore organisations based on the local cultural history, the cloaks and hats worn are symbols that dignify their work and the memory of the area's healer/witches; others made the same statement (Del Faggio, 2009; Salvetti, 2004; Salice, 2008; Valle, 2009).

However, in Paroldo the cloak is not so much a symbol of 'setting-apart' as it is of 'belonging'. In the Celtic New Year, the Pagans and Celtic re-enactors are setting themselves apart from conventional society in donning the garb of Pagan Other; to those in the Pagan or Celtic world they are showing their belonging to those alternative cultures. Another dimension that is strongly indicated in both these cases is the sense of historical importance and power, which a cloak can signal. For example, the knightly and ecclesiastic orders such as the Knights of Malta and others wear cloaks when attending events or Masses. Therefore, in Paroldo, the cloak offers material embodiment of belonging to the village and its history, dignifying the members of the village society. Its placeful materiality offers a form of bodily

engagement with place through the cloak. On the closing Sunday of the festival in 2008, I witnessed a ceremony which underscored the remarkable dignifying of the witch/healer Others which Paroldo has achieved, and which the cloak symbolises: the local Catholic priest blessed the mayor, the heads of the various folklore societies and others as they ceremoniously presented Donato with a cloak, making him an honorary witch/healer.



Figure 25 – Mayor, priest and locals in witch/healer blessing ceremony, 2008

Materiality plays a fundamental role in Paroldo's sense of place. As the sections above describe, there are potent sensory aspects to the bodily engagement with landscape and profound vernacular traditions in Paroldo. Among them are the sensuous placefulness of smelling and eating chestnuts and truffles in the autumn, the stone carvings on the village churches which are thought to convey protection to the village, or the honoured cloaks worn by locals that signify their belonging and their loyalties. Whether these or other elements

discussed below, a symmetrical and multi-sense materiality is evident (Ingold, 2000: 237; 242, cited in Witmore, 2006: 277; also Witmore, 2006: 269).

Smith (1987) reminded scholars that ritual makes something, someone — or in the case of this study, *someplace* — sacred: ‘Ritual is not an expression of or a response to “the Sacred”; rather, something or someone is made sacred by ritual (the primary sense of *sacrificium*)’ (Smith, 1987:104-105). Knott wrote, referring to the well-known work by Smith, *To Take Place* (1987):

Ritual then becomes a central creative process by which people make a meaningful world that they can inhabit. Following Durkheim, he (Smith) states that things and people become ‘sacred’ because they are identified with and used in the places where ritual is enacted (Smith, 1987:106, cited in Knott, 2005:101).

The cloaked folklorists and local historians of Paroldo have brought not only dignity and respect to the marginalised Others of Paroldo, but also a sense of meaningfulness back to the tiny village: Raffaello leading night walks to embrace ancient chestnut trees, Lorenzo introducing visitors to the *Gargarota*, the chatty spring, Donato telling stories of the long past village healers on their hilltop perch. All these are very special place-honouring practices. Celebrated during the year at specific calendrical moments, these traditions *sacrate* (Smith, 1987: 105) places and times otherwise overlooked. The rural village restores life and magic to its ‘peculiar theatre’ (Christian, 1989: 41) with the costumes, cloaks, food and music of the Saint Martin festival.

6.9 *Bagna Cauda*, identity and Celticity

An integral feature of Paroldo's events is the creation of communal dinners that are held in local families' homes (as much as possible). In the autumn in Piedmont it is traditional to serve a dish known as *Bagna Cauda*, or literally 'hot bath'; it is a kind of farm-food fondue, where one dips vegetables and bread into a rich broth seasoned liberally with garlic and anchovies. *Bagna Cauda* has become an important element in the Saint Martin weekend, according to the locals interviewed, as is the additional feature of local families opening their homes to festival participants. Traditionally the ingredients of the *Bagna Cauda* are regionally derived where possible, and residents source ingredients locally to the best of their ability. Thus the meal becomes another example of how festival participants engage in the experience of eating sense of place. The background of the dish speaks of history and tradition to Piedmont natives, often including the sobering sense of place which recalls hunger and hardship. One participant who gave a spontaneous interview during the fair, Irma, said in response to a question about the authenticity of the Saint Martin traditions:

Yes, everything they are doing here is authentic and very real. It's the real food from past times too. However, let's be honest: life here was hard, very hard. Sometimes all they had to live on in those days were chestnuts and polenta. There wasn't much else to eat (8 November 2008).

Recalling my own play on words with 're-membering' through ritual (Howell, 2010), Kathleen Stewart also has pointed out the place-based re-membering that is necessarily 'embodied in the particularity of precise effects' (Stewart, 1996: 148). Precise effects in Paroldo may be a cloak, a *Bagna Cauda* dinner, a hillside walk at night under much-loved trees, a bell tower concert. The sensuous primacy of placefulness (Casey, 1996: 19) in Paroldo's autumn becomes unavoidable with aromas of truffles and roasted chestnuts everywhere. Witmore advocated paying greater attention to sound in archaeological work:

‘Hearing (...) brings in the world. It connects people’ (2006: 282). In ethnography, sound is fundamental and attention to auditory materiality is critical. In Paroldo the bell concert from the bell tower adorned with the apotropaic stone face, Lorenzo’s dialectal folk songs as well as other music involved in the festival dinners, all play central roles in Saint Martin’s sense of place.

Other spontaneous interviews at the festival agreed that the *Bagna Cauda* was important, particularly when eaten at home in a local kitchen. In relation to this experiencing of place through experiencing its foods, Leynse discussed how festivals with communal meals particularly facilitate this placeful sense experience: ‘Food festivals (...become...) thus, an excellent site for socialization of place-based food habits and an overall sense of place’ (Leynse, 2006: 148). Leitch in her work in Italy points out that: ‘...the consumption of food (...) has become a new metaphorical reference point for the reappraisal of individual, local and national identities’ (Leitch, 2003: 452). The *Bagna Cauda* dinner plays a key role in the establishment of an identity in Paroldo’s Saint Martin festival, as it does in other calendar customs in the Paroldo festival cycle. It may be seen as an embodied link to the past, to the area’s agricultural history; less positively, it may be a useful commercialisation of nostalgia.

There is another aspect that must not be overlooked in the events that the locals are organising steadily: their identification with pre-Roman tribes in the area, whom they identify as ‘Celtic’. Raffaello in our interviews discussed various calendar customs and festivals in the area, and repeated that they were based on folk customs which coincided with pre-Christian traditions. The primary ones he and his colleagues acknowledge are: Samhain at the end of October and beginning of November; Candlemas or Imbolc in early February, and Beltane in early May.

They also celebrate the summer solstice with a communal feast and walks, as previously mentioned here. In Paroldo, as in other parts of Piedmont, the early February tradition of the *Magnin*, coincides with Candlemas (Salvetti, 2004: 75; Salice, 2008). A number of the men in the festival case studies, Donato, Lorenzo, Andrea, Piero and Raffaello all individually spoke to me of Paroldo having been a Celtic area. (As discussed in the previous chapters, it is more accurate to call the area Gallic, given that the region fell into *Gallia Cisalpina* (Kruta, 2004, 2007: 15; 94; 237).) Raffaello maintained that Saint Martin's festival was grafted onto the earlier tradition in the area of Samhain.

We did not invent anything with the festival of Saint Martin, because it already was at the end of the great festival of the Celts, Samhain, which lasted ten days. It was considered the beginning of the Celtic year. Saint Martin was at the end of this period and festival. We simply added our rediscoveries, about the witch/healer tradition in Paroldo, onto something that already existed (21 June 2008).

Thus with this conflation of traditions and folklore, Paroldo has created a unique year of observances which fuels their identity. This production and reproduction of local identity through community ritual and festival has been studied by Tak in southern Italy, emphasising the differences between summer festivals for 'outsiders' and winter events for 'insiders' (Tak, 2000: 251). He sees the experience of industrialisation in agricultural areas, with the related emigration and depopulation, as having brought a true shift in focus and meaning for the ritual cycle.

This socio-economic transition led on the one hand to a considerable decline of — functionally conceived — agrarian rituals and cults, and on the other to the revitalisation of particular festivals as symbols of local community and neighbourhoods (Tak, 2000: 251).

In Paroldo it is primarily at the three-day autumn festival of Saint Martin that the village histories are celebrated, including the *masche*, discussing and honouring their history.

Raffaello's research on the local stories of the magic circle of protection surrounding the

village asserts that it was created and reinforced over centuries by the local healer/witches. Some years the festival conferences discuss or may actually perform street theatre versions of this village tradition. (Other village participants in this fieldwork also believe in the circle of protection.) Tak's observation regarding Basilicata is relevant, where he referred to winter events as functioning 'to revitalise local society for itself by ritual invention and expansion' (2000: 251). This is a reinforcing of identity, as in Paroldo where identity is deeply engaged with place. A question that remains is whether there is a nationalistic or political aspect to the Paroldese belief in their Gallo-Celtic heritage. While Raffaello and Lorenzo particularly spoke proudly of their 'Celtic heritage', neither they nor others spoke to me of the Northern League, of Bossi the national leader of the party, nor of the political philosophies of the usually exclusionist party. However, in northern Italy, Celticity is a nuanced form of identity. A note which relates to observations made in Chapter five about the organisers of Milan's Celtic New Year is that Raffaello, as well as others involved with the organisations researching and celebrating the witch history of Paroldo, did not want to be related to the Pagan community of Wiccans and Druids in northern Italy. There is a vital and growing number of communities in the area which puts on annual conferences on such themes as the history of folk healing and countryside witchcraft in Piedmont (Howell, 2008b: 12). Nevertheless the 'witch/healers of Paroldo' organisation was reluctant to be introduced to or connected with the Pagans, or to their annual folk healer/witch Piedmont conference.

Many features of November's Saint Martin fair help both the resident community as well as the returning natives, the visiting family relations, or the tourists, to touch into 'past and present as sensed, tactile places that remember and haunt...' (Stewart, 1996: 148). Knott wrote that such embodied experiences create a 'meaningful space by which (people) can live in the world' (Knott, 2005a:100). My argument is that these 'meaningful spaces' allow us not

only to live in the world, but to hear the world and experience it fully, perceiving its many messages.



Figure 26 – The stone carving which is said to protect the village

It is found on one of the two village churches, Saint Sebastian, and faces another similar one, carved on the larger church of Saint Martin. Together they form part of the charmed barrier around the village, which locals believe protects Paroldo.

6.10 Conclusion

Grimes wrote that Religious Studies must look at ‘quite ordinary details’ and ‘utter ordinariness’ (2006: 89) to ferret out meanings. It is particularly important to do this to discover the ineffable, the unspoken. For Grimes, ethnographers must go into the shadowy spaces in the corners and find those on the periphery: ‘Talk to the janitor, see what the clean up crew thinks’ he said to me in conversation together in autumn 2009, discussing festival

fieldwork. The ethnographer in many cases and situations must be a sensitive detective, for she/he must delve into the hidden messages. Rodman writes: ‘To hear the voices of those silenced (...) requires listening with all of one’s senses’ (Rodman, 2003: 214). This thesis has discussed in previous chapters how place can be seen as a form of Other, a voice often disregarded (Kovel, 1990: 151, cited in Gardiner, 1993: 784). In Paroldo, two variations of the Other are not only heard and sensed, but celebrated, dignified and honoured: not only the harvest and the land, but also the witches and folk healers. In this sense, the fieldwork in Paroldo examines ritualised community recognition of the often overlooked or marginalised Other — both human and non or more-than-human. Under the watchful gaze of apotropaic stone faces, carved into both of the ancient churches in Paroldo, many events unfold in the village — cultural, historic, familial, gastronomic, artisanal, musical.



Figure 27 - Men at Saint Martin’s festival roasting chestnuts

The church tower in the background is Saint Sebastian where the stone face in figure 26 hangs.

Grimes' 'gods in the details' (2006: 89) lurk in the stories written here in the landscape. They emerge in the lines in the elderly people's faces, in the cloaks donned for Saint Martin, or the pungent 'witch cheese' which farmers proudly sell in the town square; the landscape speaks to the sensitive noses of the truffle dogs that sniff out the expensive tubers. Paroldo's residents exhibit vivid 'poetics of dwelling' (Ingold, 2000: 11; 26) and interanimation (Basso, 1996: 55), telling of sensuous materiality and placeful relationships with the diverse beings honoured there. Both Paroldo and Omegna offer journeys in gastronomic sense of place, allowing visitors and residents to experience 'situated eating' (Leynse, 2006) and find identity through local foods. The festival organisers in both cases, like others in this study, have themselves a profound sense of place that they share in original and evocative manners. Omegna's festivals are less historically oriented, more cultural and gastronomic. Their organisers do have a more overtly commercial purpose perhaps than those in Paroldo. Nonetheless, as the Omegna librarian Ronno Betulla mused in our interview, the mountain landscape has probably influenced the festival creation in Omegna; he speculated that the mountains' stern and rigid faces, the harsh environment of the pre-Alpine climate, have influenced the people in the Orta area (30 January 2009). There is a clear contrast within the region of Piedmont between the rolling contours and softer air of the *Langhe* region, and the more severe pre-Alpine and Alpine environments. There are contrasts with the previous Lombard festivals studied; however, like the other festivals researched here, the organisers have a dual purpose. They are seeking to establish a broader identity for the village and the region, while developing tourism and business. Celticity is a theme in Paroldo, as it is in Celtic New Year in Milan. Tiny Paroldo is striving to a) develop more business and income for the little village; b) establish its community identity through research on local traditions and folklore. Unlike Milan's Celtic New Year organisers, there does not seem to be an

exclusionary political agenda behind the scenes in the festivals in Paroldo, nor in Omegna.

On the contrary, in Omegna the Carnival embraced the diversity now emerging in the town, and symbolised it in their choice of 'Queen'. The placeful, embodied elements of the bridge bonding humanity and place are constructed strongly in these areas of Piedmont.

The next chapter utilises a scaled index to compare and analyse the various aspects that the festivals' engagement with place have revealed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY FIELDWORK

What is this mystery, the world, and above all, how is it? (...) How shall we give a definitive characterization of the world's own mode of being (Heidegger, 1975:166)?

7.0 Introducing the fieldwork analyses

The world, as Heidegger wrote in the quotation above, is indeed a mystery, and connected deeply to the world in its mysterious unfolding is the experience called sense of place. The textual accounts in Chapters five and six have laid the groundwork for the case study analyses in this chapter. In broad brushstrokes, the perspectives examined have regarded place, relationality, temporality, identity and food. The festivals that were chosen were selected due to their distinctive qualities of 'performing place' and of place-based traditions. This chapter now analyses all through the prism of *engagement*, both with place and with community. The temporality and ambiance created by the festival is a mystery in many senses, and therefore, to clarify the study's analysis, this chapter introduces a method of indexing called a 'Scale of Engagement'. The index enumerates specific qualities and aspects observed and experienced in the fieldwork, through interviews and direct participation in the festivals.

PART ONE – Scales and Analysis

7.1 Methods that index the unquantifiable

In reviewing the data gathered earlier in the research process, as Chapter two and three have already discussed in detail, it became evident that some scaled form of assessing variables was necessary.

Investigators who focused on hermeneutic or qualitative research were inclined to emphasize philosophical differences in their approach, but rejected the use of numbers. Contrary to these

beliefs, 'qualitative' data often involve the translation of ideas into numbers (Thorkildsen, 2005: 4).

Whether or not one chooses to use a numerical indexing style, heuristic data like this study's can be unpacked and illustrated more clearly with some form of measurement tool (Thorkildsen, 2005: 5). As the citation above indicates, some scholars do translate 'ideas into numbers', introducing quantitative analysis into qualitative studies. A diverse collection of theorists has used scaled assessments in order to index engagement, itself a nuanced term interpreted in various ways in different fields. Research across disciplines reveals that scales of engagement can help to measure where and how different definitions of engagement emerge, whether with a community of human beings, a physical location, concrete materials, with work duties, or emotional coping strategies.

The four examples chosen as precedents for using a similar method span the fields of archaeology, psychiatry, psychology, sociology and urban housing studies. Some use numerically organised or categorised scales, designed as for spread sheet analysis in a quantitative study (Blount et al, 2008); others simply involve textual case studies enumerated one through four, comparing and contrasting the depth of engagement (Tilley et al, 2000). Williams et al (2008) developed a psychometric scale through the use of 'facet design', which first called for an extensive literature review, as this thesis has likewise carried out. These studies offered helpful precedents. The idea for a scale of some kind arose on its own during the fieldwork, when reflecting upon how to 'measure' engagement with place, not something easily evaluated or quantified. Upon further reflection, subsequent reading and then trial analysis formatting, my chosen method was an index. It is laid out in section 7.3.

7.2 Assessing sense of place

Sense of place draws upon many layers of memory, of sense and of emotion, composed of diverse elements and sub-elements, as Williams et al found (DeMiglio and Williams, 2008: 15-21; Williams et al, 2008: 73-74). Given the wide range of possible interpretations, specific qualities and categories are desirable here with which to gauge human beings' engagement with their home-place through festival. The purpose of this chapter is to assess more precisely how the festival environment or culture engages with and expresses the place and bioregion, with the community (in all its nuanced senses), and whether it does so through ritual, through liminal space creation, performance, feasting in communal meals, or in what form. Thus, with this aim, numerical values were assigned to four scaled categories.

In the four-point scale used overall the highest possible combined score is sixteen. The highest scores indicate the most profound involvement and engagement with the local community, local bioregion or environment, as well as the greatest participatory experience and deepest awareness of place. This awareness is examined in those organising, performing, selling wares, produce and crafts, or those visiting the festival. The four categories of analysis and the values assessed here are:

1) Grassroots organisation versus top-down:

The first category examines the involvement of locals in organising the event, seen as 'grassroots', i.e. townspeople from the place, versus primarily government or tourist office (run by local government) organisers. It examined the origins and attitudes of the tourist office festival organisers, for example, comparing and contrasting them with local non-profits or individuals involved in the festival creation. The theory was that government or tourist office staff may be outsiders, and may not know the place so intimately. This contrast is

entitled ‘top-down versus grassroots’. However, in the fieldwork it became evident that most of the local tourism offices, or even government organisations creating the festivals, were frequently staffed by people from the area who had an intimate and powerful sense of place. The presumption, prior to the fieldwork, that locals in grassroots organisations rather than government or tourist office employees would have a more profound sense of place was not borne out by the fieldwork experiences.

In terms of examining the place’s capacity for agency, those in the organising teams who were not from the town or area seemed at times to have developed a strong sense of place after the experience of being involved with the festival. In order to gauge this, the ethnographic data revealing their discussions of sense of place played an important role.

The four-point scale used here is:

- 4 - high grassroots involvement;
- 3 - mainly grassroots, but some top-down/government;
- 2 - some grassroots, but mostly top-down;
- 1 - top-down only with no grassroots involvement.

2) Local offerings: depth of connection through local/regional awareness

This category examines how much the bioregion and local history, foods, traditions, folklore, and so forth are involved and are represented in the festival or fair. It indexes how profound the connection to place seems to be, and whether that is made evident through all that the festival offered, had performed or in the markets displayed. For example, some factors examined were:

- In the farmers' markets (*mercati contadini*), or other venues serving food, are the produce and products locally derived and produced? Are the recipes local?
- Are the re-enactments specifically about the place, or are they drawn from general folklore?
- What kind of talks or performances took place?

The scale here is:

- 4 - profound,
- 3 - good;
- 2 - moderate and
- 1 - shallow.

3) Sense of place manifested and ritualised

This category questions how sense of place is manifested in the festival: whether it emerges through a public ritual, or public feast, and whether in one form or another there appears some form of liminal space created. Taken into consideration, as discussed in the fieldwork, is that ritual behaviour and a sense of the sacred may arise through the sharing of food formally in communal feasting. The conception underpinning this category is that it is through the creation of 'time out of time', heterotopic time, where conventional perspectives change (Foucault, 1998) and the place's agency and capacity for relationality may be best perceived.

Here the scale is:

- 4 - yes or strong;
- 3 - existent but not strong;
- 2 - weak
- 1 - non-existent.

4) Perceptions of sense of place reported specifically by participants

This category measures the connections with place reported and experienced by the participants in the festival — emotional, psychological, sensory and so forth. The interviews were both formal and informal. The informal ones were generally carried out spontaneously in the festival, whereas the formal interviews were arranged and conducted beforehand or afterwards. All questions regarding sense of place were framed similarly.

As in question number two, the scale for point four is:

- 4 - profound,
- 3 - good;
- 2 - moderate and
- 1 - shallow.

In all categories half points can be assigned as well, to show gradations of the element or aspect reviewed, such as 2.5, 3.5, etc.

7.3 Figure 28 - CHART OF SCALES OF ENGAGEMENT	A - Milan, Celtic New Year festival	B- Andrista, Badalisc festival	C- Omega, Pumpkin & Carnival festivals	D - Paroldo, Summer of St. Martin festival
INDEX USES SCALE OF 1-4 BELOW:				
1) Organisational teams - local or 'top down'	More top-down, but good local sense of place = 2	All locals, though some in gov't; family run = 3	Local gov't but w/local involvement = 2.5	Locals & not for profits; some gov't = 3
2) Depth of connection - local food, crafts, history, lore, etc.	Good displays of local lore/crafts/sense of place = 3.5	Very trad'l/familial/local lore/customs = 4	Both P & C offer local foods/lore/traditions = 3.5	Local crafts/lore/traditions/food = 4
3) Sense of place manifested thru ritualisation/liminal time/feasting, etc.	Strong liminality in setting/performances = 3.5	Powerful liminality, ritualised hunt, costumes, feast = 4	Both minimal liminality – Pumpkin = 1.5; Carnival = 2	Place-power & liminality strong = 3.5
4) Perceptions of sense of place reported/experienced & evidenced	Good & profound for some = 3.5	Profound = 4	Good for both = 3	Profound sense of place = 4
Conclusions: Quality of Sense of Place/Power of Bridge Created	Sense of place strong, despite urban setting = 12.5	Evident sense of place & 'place-power' profound = 15	Strong sense of place in place & comm'ty: Pumpkin = 10.5 & Carnival = 11	Very strong 'place-power' & sense of place = 14.5

7.4 Case studies and index results unpacked

The following are sketches of the areas and festivals with the purpose of explaining which elements were compared and contrasted, how they were assessed and indexed, and ultimately how the final values were derived.

A: Milan's Celtic New Year

This is the most urban and industrialised area of the study, with a population of approximately one million — making it far and above the most populated place in this study. The population is highly transient and has a large percentage of immigrants, from other regions of Italy as well as from other nations.

The festival is a three-day, commercial event, with market stalls, displays of various kinds, day and night performances and so forth. Attendance in recent years is reported by the organisers as being as much as 100,000, which would include some of the fieldwork years. (This figure is surprising, given that my own estimates were much lower.) Some years, such as the years of the fieldwork, the organisers put on a conference on a related theme as well. In 2008, as discussed in Chapter five, there was an archaeological exhibition in tandem with the conference and festival. There is extensive press coverage that spans the national press, given the wide reach of the organisers.

Point 1. The organisation is largely 'top-down', due to the organisers being part of the government and representatives of a major political party. Nonetheless, their own love of

Milan and its history, as well as their personal sense of place was evident in the interview process, despite the obvious political motivations. This point was indexed at 2 for mixed grass roots and top-down.

Point 2. Regional crafts, history, foods, and so forth were greatly in evidence and there was a focused involvement with the identity and sense of place of Milan as well as of northern Italy as shown by interviews with participants, visitors and organisers. This point was given a 3.5.

Point 3. The Celtic New Year festival gave evidence of an evocative place-power from the castle and park grounds. Whether the tangible sense of place was created by place, or by the event, liminality emerged through the use of costuming, re-enactments and music. At certain moments the city park took on a 'time out of time' atmosphere, which demonstrated festival heterotopia and heterochronia. This point was indexed at 3.5.

Point 4. Also impressively sensitive and profound was the sense of place reported by various vendors and performers who participated in the study. The visitors who were spontaneously interviewed in the festival also reported in general an awareness and a sensitivity to place that was unusually acute. Celtic New Year ranked high on the overall quality of its sense of place bridge between humanity and place, surprising for so transient an urban centre. Point 4 received a 3.5 for profound/good sense of place reported.

In toto Milan's Celtic New Year received **an overall sense of place score of 12.5** on the index (out of the 16 total possible).

B: Andrista's *Badalisc* Festival

This is by contrast the smallest of the towns studied in this thesis fieldwork, with a population of approximately fifty. It is a rural hamlet in a mountainous area of northern Lombardy, where there is minimal tourism — what little there is comes primarily in summer — and no real industry of any sort. Consequently, the population has been diminishing over recent years.

The annual *Badalisc* festival on the 5th and 6th of January, Epiphany, is not commercialised in the least and largely attracts locals or the extended families of locals who return from other areas for it. The attendance, extrapolating from the crowd at the hunt, then from the evening dinner and dance, is approximately 100-200.

Point 1. The organisers for the *Badalisc* work in all manner of occupations. One key organiser and study participant works in the local government, but also in the local parish church. Organisers and those involved in running the festival showed a love for and bond with place (and with the traditions of the festival) that were tangible. This point scored a 3 for high grassroots engagement, with minimal top-down government involvement.

Point 2. The foods, feasting and other traditions at the *Badalisc* are intrinsically bound to the place, demonstrating interanimation (Basso, 1996: 55) with land and identity in an eloquent way. It is perhaps the most unbroken heritage of place-based tradition among the festivals reviewed here, with an important familial element also involved. Even the wine served is made locally, as are the foods served in the small festival community centre. It merits a 4 on this index for the place-power shown through foods, tradition, street theatre, and so forth.

Point 3. The mountainside hunt of the *Badalisc* and his subsequent ‘speech’ in the village centre are deeply ritualised, exhibiting distinctive tradition and a striking sense of liminality as well as *communitas*. Point 3 receives a 4 on the index for strongly manifested and ritualised sense of place.

Point 4. Here the *Badalisc* also scores high as the sense of place manifested by the interviews and the community’s involvement was impressive. Interviewed participants demonstrated how their self-identity was interwoven with the tiny village and its traditions, to the point of seeing the *Badalisc* as portraying and embodying their Genius Loci. This festival scored 4 on the index as profound.

Overall the *Badalisc* festival demonstrates striking place-power and Andrista’s residents’ profound sense of place comes through eloquently. It received **15 on the overall sense of place and festival index**, out of 16.

C. Omegna, the autumn Pumpkin festival and winter Carnival

Omegna has two events which figure in this thesis, their annual October Pumpkin festival and their winter, pre-Lenten Carnival. It is appropriate to elaborate here on the thesis rationale for having carried out fieldwork in two festivals in Omegna. The methodological choice was to study popular culture festivals, *feste* and *sagre*, that were not Church-related and which articulate and perform place. The decision to study two of Omegna's festivals arose organically through the fieldwork there, through discussions with the organisers. Both festivals in this fieldwork are in the mid-autumn and mid-winter, on either side of Christmas, and both are distinctively place-based.

Omegna has a population of approximately 15,000, making it the second largest in the study. It is moderately urban, both industrialised and mountainous, with a mix of population that is transient and today often foreign-born. The two festivals differ in their origins: the Pumpkin festival was created only a few years ago, while Carnival is more traditional. While its current form probably derives from the early twentieth century, its origins are as old as Italian Carnival itself (Gallo Pecca, 1987: 9-10; 13-17; 20; Fantoni, 1979: 43-44). Neither Omegna festivals require tickets to enter, although special meals or dances do require ticket sales. The Pumpkin festival is a three-day festival, while Carnival goes on for a week or more. The Pumpkin festival probably draws anywhere from 500 to 1,000 participants over the three day span, judging by the food served, and crowds at the fair. Carnival does not draw people from outside the town, or very few, and has fewer participants — probably some 200-300 at a maximum.

Point 1. Both are organised by local people who either are employees of the city tourist bureau, the *Pro-Loce*, (a part of the government), or are volunteers assisting the tourist office. All have a deep love for the area and strong sense of place.

This point scored 2.5 for mixed top-down and grassroots for both festivals.

Point 2. The structure of the two festivals differs given the type of community and cultural festivals that they are. The Pumpkin festival is a harvest fair offering culinary events, while Carnival is a calendrical community observance, drawing on earlier traditions. Nonetheless their similarity is strong in that they both show the presence of local or bioregional crafts, foods, folklore or vibrant place awareness. The Pumpkin festival offers local produce and products in their harvest market and local foods in the community meals, while Omegnian sense of place is personified and embodied by Carnival's 'River Royals'; thus their scores are indexed similarly, with high points for both festivals in local awareness. The festivals both received a 3.5 on this index.

Point 3. On this index point gauging liminality and ritualisation, the only ritualised aspect of the Pumpkin festival is that of the communal meals. For an Italian community this has a strong resonance, and indeed the chief organiser who participated in the study underlined the element of spiritual communion that the communal meal in the city piazza offers. As discussed in earlier chapters, it is a good example of 'ingesting topography' (Leynse, 2006). However, having participated in this meal three times, it was clear that there was little sense of liminality during the meals, beyond the magic of the natural setting, as compared with the hunt of the *Badalisc* or the costumed performances and re-enactments at Celtic New Year.

Alternatively Omegna's Carnival offers traditional forms of street theatre which create symbolic meanings and reinforce local identity by personifying place, while returning ancient customs to the little city. For example, on the opening morning liminality arises as the 'River Royals' arrive from the lake in the morning mist and embody their roles.

Thus Omegna's Pumpkin festival scores 1.5 on this index; while its Carnival, with differing qualities and aspects of ritualisation, scored 2.

Point 4. Perceptions of sense of place received and reported by attendees as well as by organisers are high in Omegna. Participants ranged from strictly local people at Carnival to visitors from Milan or from abroad at the Pumpkin festival; thus the reports of how they perceived place, felt in community, and so on likewise varied widely. Both groups reported profound experiences of place in general however, and gave evidence of tangible place-power emerging from Omegna's mountain lake environment. These experiences resonate across cultural boundaries or other human-created barriers.

Both Pumpkin and Carnival rate 3 on this scale of sense of place as reported by those present.

Ultimately the power of the bridge created by sense of place is strong overall for both festivals, and thus **the Pumpkin festival scored 10.5 and Carnival received 11.**

D. The Summer of Saint Martin, an autumn festival in Paroldo

This is the second smallest of the rural villages examined here, with approximately 400 residents year round. The harvest festival is a typical farm country 'showcase', as in many places. However, in Paroldo the festival combines specific agricultural and historical aspects of local knowledge and awareness, together with performances, a market, communal meals and often a conference.

The Saint Martin festival goes on for three days, and draws anywhere from 800 to 1,000 people, many of whom are extended family members, former residents or perhaps visitors from Milan and Turin, as well as from abroad. Like Omegna's communal meals, the best gauge of numbers is from the bookings for the dinners.

Point 1. As in other towns studied here, the *Pro Loco* government tourist bureau has a hand in organising the event; however, there are sometimes two local grassroots organisations that play key roles in the Saint Martin festival, the principal one being the *Masche di Paroldo*, the Witches/folk healers of Paroldo group. Thus its structure is a mix of top-down and grassroots; however the grassroots involvement is of foremost importance and influence.

Point 1 is given a 3 on this index.

Point 2. Regarding depth of connection with the land, history, bioregion and sensitivity to the place-power, there is no doubt that Paroldo's festival and organisers have profound

awareness, which they communicate well. The conferences, culinary aspects, market and performances all put place at centre stage in every related sense at the festival.

It receives a 4 in this category of the index.

Point 3. The category analysing the liminal quality offered by the festival or any ritualisation receives a slightly lesser score. Ritualisation appears in Paroldo through the annual community gatherings in the festival, and the traditional dress, the black cloak. Particular activities such as formal, communal eating of local, traditional foods, the annual bell tower concert and other local musical performances create a ritualised ambiance as well. The night-time guided walks that have become part of Saint Martin's festival (as well as other calendrical village events) evoke liminal time and mystery where Paroldo's tangible place-power emerges.

This aspect scores 3.5

Point 4. Participants interviewed spontaneously as well as those interviewed formally reported a powerful sensitivity, knowledge and awareness about the place, which they live in an embodied manner. For the natives and even descendents of natives Paroldo is an integral member of the family rather than an exterior physical place where the family happens to live.

This criterion receives a 4.

Overall the engagement with place shown through Saint Martin's Summer is powerful.

Paroldo's bridge between humanity and place is not only evident, it appears to have been established for decades, or perhaps centuries. In toto **the scale of engagement score is 14.5.**

PART TWO –Theoretical structures supporting the analyses

7.5 Factors contributing to profound place-power and deep engagement

In reviewing the analyses as laid out here, two separate and seemingly contradictory points become apparent: first, that the smallest and most remote of the towns studied here, Andrista, Lombardy and Paroldo, Piedmont, received the highest scores. Second, Milan's place-power appeared to be potent as well, despite being an urban centre and large city festival — the largest of all reviewed here. To explain and unpack these analyses more completely, I refer in the following sections 7.5 through 7.5.6 to diverse theories that influenced my thinking on the fieldwork regarding place-power, multivocality, liminality and other factors.

7.5.1 Festival and community health

The first point on the index scale examines the organisational structures, whether local or not. Small villages' festivals by the nature of their demographic make-up have intimate community involvement, and are more likely to have grassroots festival organisation — i.e. one finds events made for locals by locals, working with teams of locals. In the fieldwork I noted that the grassroots organisers often were part of the local government, thus there was a cross-over, so to speak. Having local involvement is important for sense of place in the festival as the understanding of local area traditions, folklore, community desires and needs, and so on is likely to be greater. Another feature is that local issues or problems will be seen

as more urgent. The fieldwork interviews often bore this out in both places, and this was a key aspect in the results for point one.

The fact of there being festival organisers who are locals and who may have known one another for a long time, or whose families may be closely connected, will not necessarily ensure that people will work together in smooth collaboration. Sadly, human dynamics are often difficult no matter the intimacy of association, socio-economic level or geographic area. Consequently, while sense of place may be greater, it does not follow necessarily that harmonious collaboration will result. Tak made the important observation about his fieldwork on festival in Calvello in southern Italy that, '*campanilismo* is certainly not the same as community spirit or *communitas*' (Tak, 2000: 162). The experience of collaboration, of engaging with one's community to create, organise, or staff a festival may be difficult, can involve disputes or personality conflicts, or may simply be hard work. However, such participation in one's community helps to fight the increasing alienation and disengagement rife in late modernity. Derrett has examined how 'Sense of Community' is integrally linked with sense of place and with the 'social capital' that keeps people engaged with decision-making and 'solution of community problems' (Derrett, 2003: 52).

The complex relationships that festivals provide for individual members of a community as each exchanges information and energy offers the stability and protection that community can provide and that isolation cannot (Derrett, 2003: 51).

Siena's *Palio* festival creation, taking place annually over centuries, raises the interesting possibility that cities with well-defined sense of place and the ensuing deep sense of local identity and engagement may have lower crime rates and other measurable social or environmental factors. LaChapelle's studies on Siena's *Palio* festival (LaChapelle, 1995: 60-

61) reported, as did Parsons' *Palio* studies (Parsons, 2004: 118), that in Siena, Italy there is a lower crime rate than in other cities of comparable size. Some theorists believe, as discussed by LaChapelle and Parsons, that there is a direct correlation between the health of the community, the close cooperation and communication carried out over the course of the year due to the annual festival organising, and a lower crime rate. Parsons makes the point that the *contrade* who design and carry out the *Palio* offer a number of key social functions for the city. They help in 'fostering a sense of community within a *contrada* not only across social classes, but also and perhaps most importantly, between generations' (Parsons, 2004: 118). He sees this as a 'benign form of social control' where Bakhtinian forms of ribaldry, rivalry and exuberant behaviours are held in check by the 'traditions and culture of the *contrada*' (118). Parsons theorises that the close collaboration of the *Palio* and its internal *contrada* structures may even instill greater courteousness in the city (118).

My argument is that festivals can aid communities, organisers and participants in engaging with place more deeply. As the foregoing indicates, festivals can offer another way that community health may be sustained and improved: through engaging with the human community more deeply as well. Those interviewed in Andrista spoke of the village dynamics; in such a tiny community the benefits or drawbacks can be felt directly. Salvatore Rospo spoke in the interviews about the organising of the Badalisc *festa* and indicated that disputes internally did arise. He also spoke of how they strove to mend any rifts and live amicably within the community (3 March 2009). The interviews with Patrizia backed this up and she expressed similar views. Consequently the experience can provide a double opportunity for healthful living and bonding.

Depending on the kind of carnival or festival being undertaken by a community, some theorists have argued that deep communion can result. Gardiner argues that some types of carnivalesque festival can ‘supercede the perennial dualisms of bourgeois society (...) to constitute an exemplar of Bookchin’s “ecocommunity” ’ (Gardiner, 1993: 792). Scholars studying Pagan communities have observed the community bonds and identity formation that arises in more radical, ‘fringe’ forms of group formation, including ‘neo-tribes’ (Howell, 2008b: 16-19; Letcher, 2001: 153-156; Pike, 2004: 98-100). Other studies, such as those presented by Eyles and Williams (2008), offer diverse scholars’ views that sense of place *shared in community* contributes to the greatly heightened sense of well-being impacting all areas of life, from identity construction, illness, behavioural and emotional problems and so forth (Eyles and Williams, 2008). In a large city like Milan the community within the festival is the most easily affected by the disputes or issues arising in the festival organisation. Within the Pagan community in Lombardy and Piedmont the collaboration on the Celtic New Year festival has provided healthy opportunities for collaboration among the differing groups, as witnessed in my three years of observation.

Societal health and a sense of wellbeing may spring forth from the collaborative labours that festival creation offers, through deeper engagement with one’s human community in a place — school to school, neighbourhood to neighbourhood, city to city — potentially adding another dimension to the healing quality of strong sense of place.

7.5.2 Multivocality and place-power

Multivocality is a form of inclusivity in hearing newly emerging voices of the neglected and ignored (Rodman, 2003: 204-216). My fieldwork reveals this aspect in the new religious expression and identity found at Milan's Celtic New Year, or in the unusual honouring of Paroldo's traditional witch/healers. Likewise multivocality can apply to awareness and acknowledgement of the more-than-human, the Other, which is present in many forms when we establish relationships with place. As discussed in Chapter two, Rodman has theorised that awareness of the Other helps us to experience fully the heterotopia and the altered sense of time that is not typical or everyday in places that are not 'ordinary', everyday places. Foucault's heterochronia then can emerge, a place of 'temporal discontinuity'. He wrote: 'The heterotopia begins to function fully when men are in a kind of absolute break with their traditional time' (1998, 2000: 182).

From a Nature perspective, from a more biocentric view (Kohák, 2000: 84), the delicate voices of Nature as represented by place as the Other have a greater chance of being heard without having to compete with urban chaos and the fragmented social structures of 'new capitalism' (Bruun, 2008: 8-9). This is true, and yet the analyses offered by the Scales of Engagement show from the final tally that an urban place can have dramatic sense of place where place-power is potent. Milan's central park, Sempione Park, offers a green setting for Celtic New Year that has allowed the festival to create a heterotopic liminal space. Theorists discussed in this thesis have argued that the Earth herself has a voice, an energy, and potential agency. Sometimes the sounds contributing to a 'voice of the Earth' come from the evocative energies of place (Basso, 1996; Casey, 1996; Harvey, 1997; Hillman, 1995; Ingold, 2000; Naess, 1995; Roszak, 1993). My fieldwork and analyses show the multidimensionality of

places where a potent sense of the sacred, of the numinous, can arise unexpectedly. Thus the *settings* for the events studied here do influence the festivals with the place's inherent natural power: Omegna's colourful mountain lake, Orta; Paroldo's burbling springs and rolling hillsides with groves of ancient trees; Andrista's high mountains with rushing creeks and craggy snow fields; Milan's underground water courses and hidden canals underlying a long-standing green space.

We have examples of this theory throughout the fieldwork, in Milan, Paroldo, Andrista. Regarding Milan, some participants in the fieldwork expressed their belief that Milan has special power and unique magic due to the water sources underlying the city. The city is built on top of springs and ancient waterways, and was at one time a Venice-like city of 152 kilometres of canals. (Most of its canals have been covered over in past centuries and are no longer used (Simpson, 2007).) Nonetheless, the power of place succeeds in seeping through and reaching humanity, even in the bedlam of a city like Milan's noisy downtown.

The presence of ancient power places or sacred sites, considered holy and chosen by ancient people for their rituals or magic spells, may add to the natural potency of the place — or at least, to its perceived potency. Perhaps ancient cultures sensed some existing power in the land, which caused them to choose that site for their rituals and worship. Or perhaps the worship and ritual over time instilled a certain vitality or sacredness in the land, and a knowledge of that belief in the community. Tuan wrote:

In the traditions of Taoist China and pre-Dorian Greece, nature imparts virtue or power. In the Christian tradition sanctifying power is invested in man, God's vice-regent rather than in nature. (...) Such places owe their *numen* not to any indwelling spirit of nature but to the miraculous appearances of martyred saints or of the Virgin Mary (Tuan, 1974: 148).

Whichever the origin of this impactful place-power, in Piedmont and Lombardy, (as in much of Italy), the list of preChristian and preRoman sacred sites is lengthy. It continues to grow as more sites are unearthed and excavated. For example, Andrista is surrounded by Iron Age and Bronze Age rock carvings, such as those protected by UNESCO in Val Camonica, some of which are believed by locals there to have been ritual sites for early civilisations. Chapter five discusses that some locals speculate the *Badalisc* costume and figure may embody the horned figures carved in the area (Italo and Marinella Montagna, 4-5 January 2009; Katia, 6 April 2009). Piedmont is home to numerous ancient sites with megalithic stones and rock carvings considered sacred sites, and many are thought to be sites bestowing healing or fertility. Sites such as the Nature Reserve at Bessa (Oscar and Melissa, 26 January 2008; September 2006) or the sanctuary boulder at Oropa (Morgana, 18 October 2008; Nyx, September 2006, Romanazzi, 2005) are believed to have been revered by ancients and still today are honoured by the local Pagan communities. Paroldo is near to many of Piedmont and Liguria's ancient Gallo-Celtic sites with dolmen, menhir and rock carvings, believed to be sacred to ancient tribal populations, such as the *Liguri*, and honoured by local Pagans today (Simone, 1 February & 21 June 2008; Romanazzi, 2005:90-93). There are also the remains of Roman temples dedicated to various deities in the region. In Paroldo, a standing stone of unknown origin stands propped up in the hillside churchyard of the chapel of Saint Sebastian that overlooks the village, transported there perhaps, or maybe originally there (Bosca, 21 June 2008; Salice, 21 June & 8 November 2008). This same hill forms part of the 'basin' ringing the town with its natural barrier and protective landscape. In the village's collective beliefs, the chapel and its stone mask play integral parts in the apotropaic ring of magical protection, supported and reinforced by centuries of ritual by the local witch/healers (Bosca, 21 June 2008; Salvetti, 2004; 2007; Salice, 4 June 2008; 21 June 2008; 8 November 2008). The larger church opposite, Saint Martin, likewise has a carved face, gazing across

the village at Saint Sebastian, forming its part in the circle of protection. (Figures 26 and 27 in Chapter six show these.)

The enduring question of the origin of such place-power is likely to never be answered in such a way as to satisfy quests for ‘certainty’. However, with reflexivity, heuristic as well as hermeneutic consideration of diverse features and aspects, the heterotopic, polychronic space of the festival may reveal multivocal perceptions and experiences of the Other; in turn a profound place-based relationality can appear. The results in the scale, in points 3 and 4, demonstrate this in both rural and urban settings in the fieldwork.

7.5.3 The stories in the land

Feld and Basso et al (1996) demonstrate in the diverse studies on sense of place how rural places and rural communities can maintain awareness of the stories the places have ‘gathered’ into themselves (Casey, 1996: 24; 38). In Basso’s term derived from the Apache community of Arizona, they know ‘the wisdom that sits in places’ (Basso, 1996:70).

Conversely, the lack of community in transient urban settings allows the place’s stories to be forgotten: the people are not there, *in situ*, to maintain the narratives of place and to pass on what the place has gathered of its history and their history. This research as well as others reviewed here has shown how maintaining the bonds with place and its stories, honouring its wisdom through collecting those stories, performing them and celebrating place in festival, all help to preserve the vitality of the place and the community. This is a theory that echoes Ingold’s writing on ‘dwelling deeply’ — the ability to recognise our intrinsic interconnection with place and with Nature (Ingold, 2000: 153-156; 200-201). Festivals such as the *Badalisc*

in Andrista or the Summer of Saint Martin in Paroldo allow communities to dwell deeply and keep local stories alive; they reiterate the place's stories to the community, enacting them for the community, letting the young people live them together with the elders. Fieldwork participants recounted how this can aid in keeping continuity for an area's traditions, even in the face of depopulation and hardship — traditions of food, of communal sharing, of music, of story-telling.

This thesis has discussed related concepts from Turner and others such as liminality in ritual (Turner, 1982: 24-28) and polychronic states of relationship with place, time and culture (Lymer, 2009; Witmore, 2006). It has also theorised that, as in Foucault's thinking, spaces like the fair, carnival or festival can be likely locations for the 'out of the ordinary' experience of time, of relationships and of the world (Foucault, 1998: 182-183; Rodman, 2003: 211-212). Like the experience of going on holiday and encountering ideas from cultures we did not recognise previously, the fair or *festa* offers a space to hear what we may otherwise overlook in our daily routines. As we step into the festival culture space, (akin to sitting in a darkened theatre, or beside a fire with a story-teller), we move outside of time into liminality and allow ourselves to open to new ideas, new experiences, new sensations, new voices. There is a reciprocal give and take of energy, reviving the stories in both culture and nature, and flowing across the reciprocal bridge that the festival offers. These kinds of considerations all factored into the scores on points two, three and four on the index.

7.5.4 Milan: the city as *nemeton*, as *temenos*

The origin of the city in history was both a sanctuary, built on cosmic dimensions, as well as a fortified strategic settlement. It set aside special places for rituals, as well as for commerce. This is true throughout the world, and certainly in Europe and the British Isles (Kruta, 2007: 102-103; Smith, 1987: 49-50; 148; Tilley, et al, 2000: 217; Tuan, 1974: 151-157). The sacred gathering site reported to be underlying the centre of Milan was called a *nemeton* by my fieldwork participants in Milan (Elena Merlo, 23 September 2008), a term they believe to apply to Gallo-Celtic culture. This term is used widely in the contemporary Pagan world and in the body of non-academic literature on the pan-Celtic peoples of Europe to denote the sacred groves or sacred gathering places of the Druids and their tribes (Carr-Gomm, 1991: 94). For the Greeks and Romans the city's heart held shrines to various deities, the *temenos* in Greek, *templum* for the Romans: it was an enclosure set apart (Smith, 1987: 49-50; 104). As a place where humanity overcame the concerns of the wilderness, 'The city liberates its citizens from the need for incessant toil to maintain their bodies' wrote Tuan (1974: 150). Among other things, ostensibly this 'liberation' meant that citizens of the City of God could focus more time on the sacred.

It is sadly ironic therefore that in cities today it seems to be more difficult to stop and step outside of a work-driven, capitalist view of life and the world around us. Perhaps this is the role of the festival and carnival. Gardiner's theories, drawing on Bakhtin, support this as well (Gardiner, 1993:792; 799). In regard to these theories, it is interesting to note that Milan's urban Celtic New Year festival scored a 12.5 overall. The score is not as high on the Scale of Engagement as other more rural areas, but still surprisingly strong for a city park. Many in the fieldwork sensed a potent sense of place in Milan's centre, and in the Castle grounds in

particular; this factor was discussed by the Celtic New Year organisers in the fieldwork, as shown in Chapter five. It is possible that the sensitive and strongly-felt sense of place of participants and organisers, as well as that of the visitors to Celtic New Year at the Castle, could stem from ancient remains underlying the Sempione Park. It is as possible as any explanation. The festival certainly derives power from its historically evocative setting and symbolism. Additionally the park is connected to the heart of Milan, the Duomo square, by a pedestrianised avenue which the re-enactors process along during Celtic New Year (figures 14 and 15, in Chapter five). Thus the *temenos* of Milan from mediaeval times, its principal piazza, is also highlighted in the festival. Whatever its multidimensional, multilocal and multivocal sources, Celtic New Year at the Castle feels Milan's place-power and renders it visibility and acknowledgement.

7.5.5 Death, the numinous and the Other

Point number three on the scaled index reviewed a category that posed the question of whether liminal space was created with obvious ritualisation at the festival. Some theorists such as Foucault, Gardiner and Rodman, believe that heterochronia and time out of time already inherently exists in the festival or carnival. The festival heterochronia and non-ordinary ambiance is manifested in various ways and through various ritual forms, which my argument states may allow for the *numen* and the more-than-human Other to be sensed more potently. Point three reviews how in some cases communal feasting with a heavy emphasis on the time and place, with music and folklore, or through night-time walks, performances in costume and so forth, created opportunities for festival participants to experience an expanded, deeper sense of place. The results were based as much upon the researcher and ethnographer's impressions and observations as they were drawn from the interviews.

Consequently the inclusion of this aspect of festival culture as a means to sense of place may require some unpacking and explanation.

A numinous quality can arise quickly for many people from places connected with crisis, death, or with traumatic historic symbols. Foucault included cemeteries in his grouping of primary heterotopias (Foucault, 1998: 180-181). Bell wrote of the symbolic power of battlefields and other sites where horrors took place such as Auschwitz or Hiroshima, as do Chidester and Linenthal (1995: 3-5). Bell described such sites as evoking ‘images and emotions so unlike those of daily life as to endow these places with tangible spirituality’ (Bell, 1997:158). Awareness of death does help one to step outside of mundane consciousness and focus; a jolt of danger, or of stark, startling reality can shock one out of customary complacency or a mundane mindset and into heightened listening and focus. Turner saw such places and awareness as inducing liminality in ‘complex societies, the “extreme situations” beloved of existentialist writers: torture, murder, war, the verge of suicide, hospital tragedies, the point of execution, etc.’ (Turner, 1982: 46-47). Here is an illustration from my life, which has relevance to this study’s emphasis on the ‘stories that sit in a place’ and whether that enhances place-power. Years ago I worked in lower Manhattan for two different companies which were both located in the Twin Towers at NY’s World Trade Centre. At that time I felt a deep sense of place with that area for many reasons, among them the physical place’s history and geography as well as from my family’s history. Despite being one of the most chaotic urban settings imaginable, with the deafening bedlam of Wall Street’s financial districts, it offered a profound sense of place to me. Today the Twin Towers are gone, and there is instead a memorial site commemorating the approximately three thousand people killed there in September 2001. Does that make the site more sacred or more liminal to observers today than it did to me twenty-five years ago? For many people,

yes, it no doubt creates a powerful sense of liminality and of the numinous there due to the site being associated with death, destruction and upheaval (Turner, 1982: 46-47).

Additionally there are rituals of memorial enacted annually, which re-establish the symbols of 'tangible spirituality', as Bell termed these images in historical sites of tragic memory. For many Americans, as well as for many foreign visitors, this is now a place of pilgrimage, with its natural power enhanced by the numinosity derived from tragic symbolism and history.

Chidester and Linenthal have also discussed how a battlefield becomes both sacred space and a site for patriotic pilgrimage, using the example of the USS Arizona Memorial in Hawaii (1995: 3-4). However, through my personal lens, the triangular area of land that forms lower Manhattan, where the Hudson River and the East River meet dramatically on the edge of the Atlantic, was already charged and evocative, offering many areas which could easily become liminal spaces — if one had the time and focus to experience it. Place was already powerful there for me, inherent in the dramatic geographic location as well as in my store of memories and images. This anecdote can help to illustrate how sites related to death or horror may augment existing place-power with universal or society-invoked symbols.

In a less traumatic fashion, the festivals observed in this study offer methods to jolt visitors out of everyday roles, consciousness and relationships, including their usual sense of place. The liminal arises with a sense of numinosity, without imagery of death *per se*, but occasionally with a certain *frisson* of danger or fear. In the case of the winter hunt of the *Badalisc* there is a sense of danger as he is hunted by torchlight and then tied up when caught, as a 'ferocious beast'. Darkness and the thought of the hovering spirits of ancient witches sharpen visitors' senses as Raffaello leads the nocturnal perambulations in Paroldo. The events on the misty Castle grounds in Milan easily evoke strong emotions (and past ages) when Iron Age warriors ride or parade through fire-lit encampments on horseback holding

huge weaponry. In short, the Other and the other-worldly can appear close by and are easily evoked in our world. In that way this expanded sense goes side by side, closely akin to sense of place, likewise a quality we humans often forget to acknowledge. The polychronic space of the festival, a heterotopia with its heterochronia, even in broad daylight or in a city centre can magically create numinous liminality that wakes us to this atavistic awareness we term sense of place.

This has further elucidated aspects of the index's point three regarding what and how liminal space can emerge in the festivals studied.

7.6 Political considerations and sense of place

Chapter five reviewed concepts of civic and civil religion, in particular drawing from Parsons (2004) and related these concepts to the festivals in Lombardy, Celtic New Year and the *Badalisc*. For tiny Andrista, it is possible to view the fervent devotion to the *Badalisc* among the villagers as civil religion — not because it is a traditionally Catholic festival, not because they worship the monster — but because the *festa* is a source for self-identification in Andrista. It is an identity that they protect and honour. In Andrista, anyone who wished to abolish the *Badalisc*, who did not believe in his importance, would be seen as tantamount to a traitor and could ostensibly be ostracised. This is akin to behaviours in times past regarding loyalty to Catholic ideas or Catholic traditions in Italy. Hence my conclusion is that the *Badalisc* verges on, if not becomes fully, a form of civil religion in Andrista, offering locals a powerful form of popular religion supporting and protecting their sense of place and identity.

Paroldo does not have such an intensely passionate identification with its festivals, although its sense of place is fervently held and felt, thus the category of civil religion does not apply to Paroldo's festivals. There is a certain political 'flavour' to their sense of identity, however, in that Paroldese seem to view themselves as having Gallo-Celtic origins and see the legacy of that Celtic heritage in their traditions. As discussed in Chapter six, there is also some involvement of *Slow Food* in Paroldo's festivals and communal feasts. *Slow Food* is much more than a culinary or gastronomic organisation, as shown already. The organisation was conceived and born out of the radical leftwing political foment in Italy in the 1960s and 70s, and has traditionally kept a leftwing bent (Andrews, 2008: 166-169; Leitch, 2003: 438; 448-451). Its politics, philosophies and wide-ranging cultural reach are too complex to characterise simplistically. However, in brief, it is likely that the presence of *Slow Food* at the festivals in Paroldo, and its relationships in Paroldo with key people in the festival organisation will have political and socio-economic influence due to *Slow Food*'s own philosophies and aims.

Leitch (2003) assessed the risks and possible negative implications in revering rural customs or history:

Demands to protect local culinary traditions and cultural diversity could just as easily risk appropriation by radical regionalist movements with exclusionary political agendas. Anti-corporate rhetoric combined with narratives of cultural loss may fuel a deepening sense of nationalist nostalgia (2003: 457).

Nationalist nostalgia in Italy can become *campanilismo* taken to an extreme of exclusionary parochialism, which sadly has appeared in many places in Italy and particularly in the north. This creates a slant to bonds with place termed 'poisoned sense of place' by Relph: 'an excess of local or national zeal (with) a tendency to become a platform for ethnic nationalist supremacy and xenophobia' (Relph, 1997, quoted in Eyles and Williams, 2008: 22-24).

Celticity similar to that espoused in Celtic New Year in Milan could propagate such aptly named 'poisoned sense of place'. The symbolism purposely promoted of Gallo-Celtic warriors marching through Milan to Piazza Duomo and supported by the xenophobic Northern League is powerful. Their goals could arguably be seen as an aim to create a form of civil religion. Happily, for all the charming bioregional fervour and local pride on view, this brand of exclusionary sentiment was not visible in rural Paroldo during my fieldwork. Therefore let us hope that *Slow Food's* involvement in Paroldo will continue to have a positive impact, that the health-minded community engagement witnessed in the 2008-2009 fieldwork prevails, commercial interests remain in balance, and destructive nationalism or *campanilismo* will likewise remain in check.

7.7 Conclusion

As with so many questions in Nature and in life, we have seen examples here of 'the chicken or the egg' conundrums (to borrow a vernacular expression) regarding sense of place. Some of the fieldwork begged the question of whether places had an existing vitality and power from the geologic or geographic settings and features which the original tribal cultures acknowledged and therefore had built their own sites; or whether human activity 'sacred' the space first (Smith, 1987: 104-105). I would argue that the ancients' own sense of place about sites significant to them instilled further meaning in the land through their engagement with the land and their rites. This was theorised in the 'Nature, Culture, Clitter' article by Tilley et al (2000), which among others influenced this chapter's Scale of Engagement. In cases such as these, human stories and wisdom can be seen as contributing further to the land's own stories and wisdom, gathering and congealing in place, as Casey (1996), Heyd (1999) and Ingold (2000) have argued.

Finally, postmodern festivals have added their stories and messages to the sense of place and its vitality, having been influenced originally by the local history, culture and place. It is all cyclical — like the seasons which give birth to the festival cycle, much in life and in Nature reveals how all is connected, interanimated and intertwined. This profound engagement of place and people offers a challenge to those endeavouring to find the source of the sense of place and the land's vitality. Perhaps it is enough to say 'the place is sacred, the place is powerful', stilling reductionist Cartesian urges (recent arrivals in human consciousness) which can compel one to dig and split and strip. The foregoing points speak to over-arching themes brought out in earlier chapters: the need for relational epistemologies (Ingold, 2000; Milton, 2002), where our relational world and our sense of reciprocity (Sapelli, 1995) extend to all our relationships, including those with place and with Nature (Kohák, 2000, Naess, 1995; Plumwood, 1995, 2008). When we keep the Other's stories alive in our beloved places, we maintain our relational worldview, aiding in the creation of an ethos and a worldview that are health-giving and vitality-enhancing. The stories of place and its cultural mythologies play a critical part, as do festivals, in both creating and maintaining 'place accountability' (Plumwood, 2008: 9).

This chapter has analysed the festival fieldwork with a numerical index, demonstrating the sense of place of each of the festivals studied here, the potential liminality and the profundity of bonds between place and community that are communicated by the festivals. The relational epistemology of humanity and place was examined, and the poetics of dwelling in each festival analysed to shed new light on the mystery of sense of place. Tiny Paroldo and Andrista, the most rural of the communities studied here, were found to have the most

profound engagement with place and community. One could say ‘not surprisingly’. However, Milan too has shown that the right combination of factors can create cohesive *communitas*, liminal, polychronic space and deep engagement with place. The last chapter concludes with final reflections about this argument, reviewing what these analyses may offer, and how this study contributes to existing scholarship.

CONCLUSIONS

Johnny and Tito lay down side by side in a square between two trunks, clear of snow, they felt the ground soft and sweet, not too yielding, the ideal ground for lying in a first dialogue with the spring earth (Fenoglio, 1995: 77).

8.0 Returning to the basics

This chapter briefly examines how the principal research questions on sense of place and festival in Italy have been answered. The thesis fieldwork has illustrated that festival culture can be a bridge not only between human-Nature communities, but also between human communities. The concept of the Other has been explored using these differing perspectives of both Nature and human as Other.

The analysis in the previous chapter shows the multiple features of the festivals' sense of place and demonstrates the many interlocking strands that fortify the festival bridge linking humanity and place. This bridge is given shape and re-fortified through the embodied poetics of dwelling offered by rituals, performances, foodways and stories. In concluding the thesis this chapter also delineates where and how this work contributes to existing scholarship and literature.

8.1 Dialoguing with the Earth

Ingold wrote, 'Woven like a tapestry from the lives of its inhabitants, the land is (...) history congealed' (Ingold, 2000: 150). The lands studied in this thesis' fieldwork offer eloquent examples of how place speaks to those who can listen. Novelist Beppe Fenoglio was a native of one of the regions studied in this thesis, the *Langhe*. The fictionalised version of

Fenoglio's involvement in the fierce anti-Fascist partisan activity in Italy in World War II, *Johnny the Partisan*, from which the quotation opening this chapter originates, gives poignant evidence of the profound sense of place which the Italians maintained even in war time.

Fenoglio's Johnny constantly mentions the land and its forms, the rivers, flowers, trees, and so forth as he goes about his terrifying and tragic duties in wartime. Despite the trauma of war the men sought to have connection, to find dialogue not only with each other, but also with their home earth — as do other natives of northern Italy today. Place is part of the family in rural Italy, as my fieldwork reveals, and this is still true today in parts of Piedmont and Lombardy.

In addition to Ingold, the theoretical framework of this thesis has included theorists such as Basso, Bennet, Ingold, Kohák, Milton, Rodman, Watson, among others, who write of the agency of place and of humanity's ability (as well as the need) for relationships diverse enough to include the Other. This relational epistemology can include place as Other. The theoretical framework on sense of place and on environmental philosophy has also been supported by theorists on festival in Italy or in Italian-American communities, such as Orsi, Parsons, Tak. My structuring of the theoretical framework, drawing on these scholars and many more, has intertwined these and other theories. My purpose has been to demonstrate that in heterotopic spaces with liminality, such as some forms of festival time, there may also be polychronic features, and in these 'other spaces', humanity can experience forms of 'dialogue' with place as with community. These spaces of unique temporality can become apparent in various kinds of festival, including a large urban event like Milan's Celtic New Year, or a tiny community ritual like Andrista's *Badalisc*, where multiple time periods intersect, a liminal atmosphere is created, and potent sense of place pervades all aspects of

the festival. My research has demonstrated that place and relationality can be performed and embodied in many diverse festival forms.

8.2 Initial questions: what was asked

To sum up the overall research questions in a more concise phrase: Is sense of place manifested through community festivals in northern Italy, and what positive outcome might this engagement with place and community offer?

- 1) The first premise of this thesis is that sense of place exists, and is fundamental in humanity, individually and societally. The diverse theorists examined established that both are true and that sense of place is not an academic construct.
- 2) Given that the first is true, various theories were discussed to deepen the understanding of why sense of place and relationships with place are important, for the individual and for the society. The importance is highlighted in diverse critical sources, from healthcare to philosophy, ecology, geography, archaeology, ritual studies, and so forth. The span of the literature review demonstrates that this is an interdisciplinary thesis, with wide application.
- 3) Next, the theory that the festival can be considered at times a public ritual was examined. This theoretical review validated the thesis arguments that the festivals studied here answer both Bell's (1997) and Grimes' (1975, 2006) components and categories defining a ritual. Knott (2005a; 2005b) and Smith (1987) as well as others entered into the examination of ritual and place.
- 4) Deeply intertwined with these principal arguments of the thesis is the theory that place is active and has a power, a capacity for agency. Following on theories from

Foucault (1967, 1998, 2000), Rodman (2003) and Witmore (2006), we saw that festivals open a space that is out of the ordinary in its temporality and capability, that is heterotopic and also often polychronic. This allows for new awareness to reach festival participants, festival organisers, festival visitors — an awareness that springs from the place's influence and agency.

- 5) A fundamental metaphor of the thesis is that of the festival as a bridge between humanity and place. This led to an exploration of the relationality of place as a fundamental component of this thesis, where energy and communication can flow back and forth as through a dynamic conduit, or a two-way bridge. The thesis argues that the heterotopic and polychronic space of the festival helps to facilitate this.
- 6) Finally the concept was reviewed that such sense of place can offer other benefits to a community, such as helping to maintain or to draw population in rural, depopulating regions (Paroldo, Andrista). It may also allow for the multivocality of diverse populations to be expressed and acknowledged (Milan, Omegna). These factors can foster wider community wellbeing, as alluded to in point 2 (Eyles and Williams, 2008).

8.2.1 Analyses revisited: what was answered

Five festivals in four towns were studied, two rural areas and two urban settings. The festivals chosen were selected to give examples of 'performing place' in a distinctive manner. It was a methodological, theory-driven choice not to study the patron saint or Madonna traditions, which are annual, calendrical festivals occurring in all of Italy. Although Paroldo's autumn harvest festival is named after its patron saint, Saint Martin, it is primarily a harvest fair where unusual elements of the village's folklore and history are also represented. For example, the village priest was involved in a ceremony honouring a local writer on the

Sunday of the 2008 fieldwork in Paroldo; however, generally there are no Masses or religious processions involved in Saint Martin's Summer in November.

The festival fieldwork analyses in Chapter seven (section 7.3) used a scaled index to assess engagement with place and community in the five festivals, drawing categories from elements of the thesis questions. The index delineated the outcomes in a quantitative format and then reviewed the analyses in detail. To sum up in brief it appears that while the two most rural villages, Andrista and Paroldo, had the highest score on the index of engagement with place, the largest city in the study, Milan, also scored well on engagement with place. In this regard, the initial assumptions and theories when embarking upon the study, that a rural place is where the agency of place can be best felt and expressed by the festival/ritual, and where community can come together most relationally and meaningfully, were both proven and at the same time disproven.

Through the Scale of Engagement surprising findings emerged regarding Milan's Celtic New Year. It was a somewhat unexpected outcome to discover that the festival offers a place for multivocality to both the human community and the place's 'voice'. This aspect of the newly established urban festival gave support to two different threads of the woven theories in the thesis structure. First, Sapelli has theorised that in Italy the waves of emigration out of the countryside and into the major urban centres like Milan brought a 'ruralisation of the cities' (Sapelli, 1995: 13, 118). This theory, through his critical analyses of the social and economic effects of emigration demonstrate that rural customs, mindsets and mores are transferred to the city, such as his 'chains of reciprocity'. In essence, Milan's Celtic New Year gave evidence of this phenomenon through the remarkable cohesiveness and significant

relationality that the Pagan community demonstrated there. Turner's theories of *communitas* are exhibited in this festival, as Chapter seven also discussed: the conflicts and social dramas internal to the Pagan communities are alleviated and ameliorated through the collaboration and annual reunions represented by Celtic New Year (Turner, 1982: 53-59, 84-87). In essence, the fair represents something more important to people than pursuing internecine and internal disputes: it offers an opportunity to reunite annually in a festive public occasion, dressed in cloaks, and other forms of alternative clothing that express Otherness as Pagans. The community can assemble, still in Milan yet surrounded by a heterotopic outdoor atmosphere evoked with Celtic re-enactments, crafts, music, and so forth. (Many of the community also sell their services, crafts or art.) Through the liminality that is created by the festival, the community is drawn together and *communitas* re-emerges out of social conflicts. This same Turnerian theory could be applied to Andrista's process through the Badalisc *festas*: through liminality and the desire for community survival internal social drama is overcome, and the group then enters into *communitas*.

Although Omegna's two festivals scored the lowest of the four places observed, Carnival in Omegna scored well for an urban festival. This was due to its distinctive performing of place in the *dramatis personae* of the 'River Royals' who lead the Carnival and due to its ritualised parades and feasting; it also manifested through the place-based relationality of local people. Interesting examples of multilocality and multivocality, as well as of Bakhtinian reversal traditions, were displayed through their choice in 2009 of an immigrant 'of colour' for the Carnival Queen (Bakhtin, 1984; Rodman, 2003). It is probably fair to say that longer observation from a more 'insider' position might have led to a different score for Omegna on point 3 in the index. This is a possible choice for later ethnographic involvement.

Thus the initial research question as repeated above in section 8.2, 'Is sense of place manifested through community festivals in northern Italy?' was answered with a definite affirmative.

8.3 Not permitting the magic to escape: positive outcomes

A secondary research question arose: what positive outcomes can engagement with place and community offer? One outcome from festival, be they newly created, or iterations of more historic traditions, is the effect of drawing population into or maintaining existing population in a rural place. Historians of Italy Sapelli (1995) and Ginsborg (2003) have studied the enormous impact of on-going rural emigration to the cities in post World War II Italy. More than one of the fieldwork participants called the *Langhe*, the region of Paroldo, a 'desert' in regards to its depopulation. Tak discussed how the rituals he has observed had changed after decades of emigration; for example the San Donato commemorations which he studied in the south altered considerably as the numbers of children diminished in the villages (Tak, 2000: 219). Happily, despite these changes, and contrary to what social scientists observing had predicted, the local rituals did not disappear (Tak, 2000: 218). This thesis study of identity and community as intertwined with place and festival demonstrates why the festival/rituals do not and will not disappear.

Christian saw depopulation sapping the life out of the villages in northern Spain in the 1970s, describing the 'magic leaking out year by year' from their village rituals and from what he called their 'peculiar theatre' (Christian, 1972, 1989: 40-41). The Italian communities in this fieldwork are striving to fix the magic in place with festivals and other initiatives, and thereby

gather the people in, together with their stories. Folklorists, anthropologists, historians and other scholars encountered in this thesis research and fieldwork are working avidly to discover, document and preserve local history, local awareness and traditions. Donato Bosca, Martina Mela, Elena Merlo, Raffaello Salice, Silvana Gavaldo, Italo and Marinella Montagna, Patrizia Murana, Oscar and Melissa Quercia and many others interviewed or encountered during this fieldwork articulated their passion for their region or home-places' stories, folklore, tragedies, mysteries, music, foods and so forth. Generally speaking there was no 'disneyfication' (Relph, 1976, 2008) or remunerative nostalgia-selling in evidence; their enthusiasm came out of a love of home and tradition, and a passion for preserving them. The ideal scenario as a scholar would be to return to Paroldo and Andrista in ten years' time, as Leitch did to her place of fieldwork in Tuscany (2003). It would provide an opportunity for a second study to review how the festivals had proceeded, how they had changed, and how the players as well as the stage setting had evolved, been adapted or perhaps disappeared. From all that has been observed, heard and analysed, my prognosis is that it is unlikely — at least in the rural areas studied in this thesis, Andrista's *Badalisc* or Paroldo's Saint Martin's Summer — that the festivals will disappear in the next decade. On the contrary, my prognosis is that they are very likely to grow in size and outside publicity. This is a positive outcome for a number of reasons.

This research makes evident that festival offers healthful contributions to community, to awareness of the Other in its multivocal forms and to fighting late modern alienation. The magic, the stories, the wisdom sit in place, they gather us in, and together these elements aid in keeping the place's vibrancy alive (Basso, 1996; Casey, 1996; Christian, 1989; Ingold, 2000).

8.4 The literature niche that this work fills

The thesis argues that festivals can be hybrids that offer heterotopic, polychronic temporality. Italy's late industrialisation has allowed for cultural values of deep relationality and materiality to linger, some particularly notably in the countryside. The festivals studied provide spaces of engagement that demonstrate notable forms of communion with place and performance of place. They also permit new awareness to arise, including the multivocal awareness of the Other. In this heterotopic time with its new multivocality, communities experience place and each other through multiple traditions — many of which are ritualised, such as feasts exhibiting place-specific foodways. Eyles and Williams discuss sense of place as a 'multidisciplinary construct' (2008: 19). My argument is, as this thesis has shown, that sense of place is instead interdisciplinary; likewise this thesis' contribution to existing scholarship is interdisciplinary. As the title indicates, the literature review in Chapter two and some of the analyses, there are three primary lines of theory intersecting in this thesis; there are secondary ones as well. The three primary academic niches which this scholarship fills are: a) Religious Studies (and related areas of philosophy and ritual studies); b) interdisciplinary environmental studies; and c) Italian studies. There is in addition an emerging field of critical work in festival studies, which draws from all of the above, as well as from anthropology and performance studies.

This study contributes to academia and to the larger society in a number of manners: one is through its metaphoric and symbolic examination of northern Italian festival and ritual as one means of building a bridge to place, through complex and nuanced 'poetics of dwelling' (Ingold, 2000). No other work has emerged specifically on this topic; and no other work has

examined sense of place with these intersecting theories to date. Foucault's theories on festival heterotopia have been studied widely, and used in many different contexts, but my demonstration of the festival's intersection with theories of polychronic spaces and hybrids of culture is a unique critical perspective. My work also contributes in the larger sense, due to the fact that the particular festivals and communities examined here have not been studied by scholars, neither in Italian nor in English. (Generally speaking, northern Italy is under-documented — at least outside of Italy and in English.) Thus this work offers fresh, original contributions to literature on sense of place, on ritual as festival, on heterotopic temporality, on Italy and on distinctive European place-based traditions. Like the metaphors illustrating the thesis itself, the niche in the existing scholarship that this thesis fills is one where various critical strands meet.

One of my goals is to have the thesis published in Italian as well as in English. The work makes a needed contribution to thought in Italy as well as in the English-speaking world.

8.5 Concluding reflections

Humanity in the late postmodern era moves quickly through a landscape, without engaging with it or honouring it. The resulting loss of sense of place contributes to increased alienation in society and a general loss of wellbeing. Nature becomes regarded as a resource to be consumed, to serve ego-driven ends or capitalist economic purposes. Place's power for agency generally is overlooked, nor do people appreciate that — like diverse human communities — place too can be an Other, capable of relationship, of influencing us and of acting upon us. My research has shown that place-based community festival and ritual can provide a possible antidote to these deleterious 'conditions' in society. The combination of

critical research and ethnography in this thesis has described varied and nuanced means by which individuals and communities may recover their 'original openness to the world' (Ingold, 2007a: 201), and hopefully, will enjoy healthful, embodied relationality. Whatever the lens, perspective or nature of the discourse, the rediscovery of sense of place is timely and needed.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWS AND PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

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NB: This list does not include the spontaneous, on-the-spot interviews carried out in the festivals themselves, as the majority of those people were anonymous. There were between

fifteen and twenty people, approximately, interviewed in each festival during the fieldwork and pilot studies.

APPENDIX B

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